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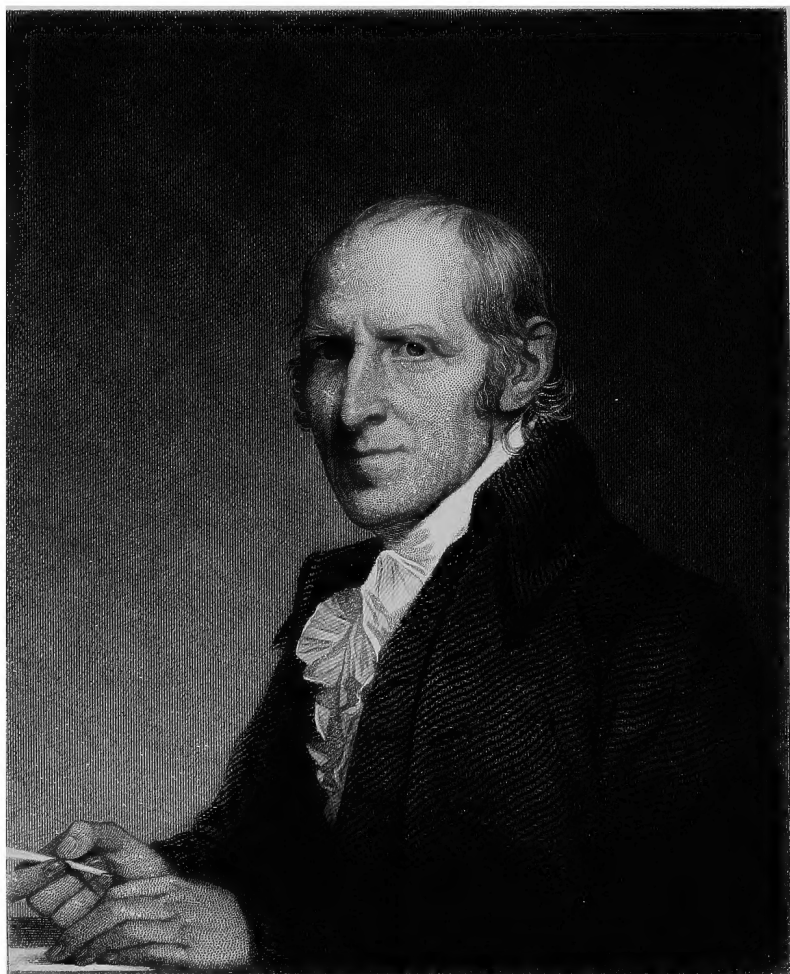
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THE LIFE
OF
TIMOTHY PICKERING.

VOL. I.



Stuart Pinx.

H.W. Smith Sc.

Timothy Pickens.

Æt. 63

THE LIFE
OF
TIMOTHY PICKERING.

BY HIS SON,
OCTAVIUS PICKERING.

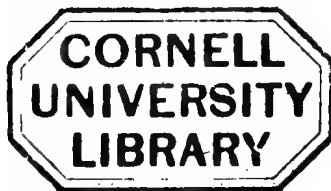
VOLUME I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

1867.

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P R E F A C E .

FROM various causes the Biography of COLONEL TIMOTHY PICKERING has been delayed until most of his friends and other contemporaries who felt a personal regard for him have passed away ; but the active part which he took, and the important offices which he held, first in the American Revolution, next in the Cabinets of President Washington and President John Adams, and afterwards as a member successively of the Senate and of the House of Representatives of the United States, give to the record of his life a permanent interest. He was likewise several times employed by President Washington on missions to treat with different tribes of Indians. Some of his official papers, and portions of his private correspondence with eminent men of his day, are of much value in relation to the history of the United States ; and his efforts to induce the "Connecticut Settlers" in the valley of Wyoming to submit to the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania connect him intimately with the history of that State.

As an ardent Federalist, uttering freely his opinions of the conduct and character of his Democratic oppo-

nents, at times when party spirit was at its height, he made political enemies, who were unsparing in their slanders and abuse of him for the purpose of destroying his influence. The bitter animosities of those periods have subsided, having given place to new ones, between new political parties ; and the present generation and its successors can view his character with impartiality.

This First Volume brings his Life down about three years beyond the end of the war of the Revolution. His writings are very numerous, and it is impossible for me now to determine how many volumes a proper selection from them, with appropriate observations in relation to them, will occupy. It is my intention to proceed in the preparation and publication of the succeeding volumes as fast as circumstances may permit.

Very often, in giving passages from Colonel Pickering's letters, I can only have recourse to the rough draught he retained ; a comparison of which with the fair copy sent would no doubt in some instances show verbal discrepancies. Grammatical inaccuracies and other oversights (which, however, seldom occur), I do not hesitate to correct.

O. P.

Boston, *August*, 1867.

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LIFE

OF

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction, by his Son, John Pickering. — His Birth and Ancestors. — His Wife. — His College Life and his Reminiscences of it. — Early Letter to his Father.

It was the intention of the late John Pickering to prepare and publish memoirs of his father, Colonel Timothy Pickering, with selections from his writings; but, to the lasting regret of his friends, the labors of his profession, and the time required for the revision of his "Lexicon of the Greek Language," left him but little leisure for the accomplishment of his design. He wrote a few pages, which follow, beginning with the proposed title-page of his work: —

"Memoirs of Colonel Timothy Pickering, of the American Revolutionary Army: With Notices of Distinguished Political Contemporaries, during the Administrations of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson: With Extracts from his Correspondence.

Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solidâ. — *Hor.*

Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius, nec beneficio nec injuriâ cogniti. — *Tacit.*
He who flatters the dead deceives the living. — *Johnson.*"

"BOSTON, January 29th, 1840. — This day, being the anniversary of my father's death, I resume the inter-

esting, yet in some respects painful, occupation of writing a memoir of his varied and eventful life, to be accompanied with select parts of his extensive correspondence with the principal public men of his time. I began to make the necessary preparation for the work on the anniversary of his birth, July 17th, 1837, and now find, before I am aware of the rapid lapse of time, that two years and a half have gone by. I might still find an apology for delay, perhaps, in the circumstance of being still compelled, as I have been through the most of my life, to devote my time to the labors of my profession, in order to support my family, who have the first claim upon me. But I feel deeply the weight of that filial duty which demands the performance of this task,—important in a public as well as private view,—and I am sure that the members of my family will cheerfully submit to such sacrifices as cannot be avoided in this case. To my children the character of their grandparent will be as dear and as important, in some respects, as it has been to myself; and I feel a strong conviction that I cannot render a greater service to them and their youthful contemporaries, than by a faithful exhibition of his public and private life, as an exemplar for the conduct and government of their own lives.

“ MEMOIRS, &c.

“The subject of the following Memoirs, Colonel TIMOTHY PICKERING, was born at Salem, in the State of Massachusetts, on the 6th day of July, 1745, Old Style [17th of July, New Style]. He was a lineal descendant of John Pickering (one of the early colonists), who emigrated from Great Britain to America in the

reign of King Charles the First, and who was admitted, according to the colonial laws of that period, to be an inhabitant, by a vote passed at a public meeting of the town [of Salem], on the 7th day of the 12th month, 1636, corresponding to February 7th, 1637.* A brief account of this first settler, and of his descendants, was collected by the subject of these Memoirs, from various family papers, in the year 1793, and entered in a memorandum-book kept by him, from which the following extracts are made:—

“Family attachment, the interest we naturally take in events relative to our ancestors, the curiosity (perhaps the vanity) we are disposed to indulge in tracing our descent, and the gratification it may afford to my posterity, induce me to mark such simple facts relative to the family of which I am a member, as have come to my knowledge; though it will amount to little more than the noting of their births and deaths.

“John Pickering [the first settler] was born in Old England, about the year 1615. . . . He had two sons, John and Jonathan. . . . The last-named John Pickering† was the father of John Pickering, my grandfather. . . . He had another son, named William, of whom I, when a boy, heard my father relate the following story: That in Queen Anne’s war (at the beginning of the present century) he was the master, or skipper, of a fishing

* “The form of the vote may not be uninteresting to the antiquarian: ‘7th of 12 Mo., 1636. Jno. Pickering, carpenter, granted to be [an] inhabitant.’ J. P.”

† He was married in 1657 to Alice Flint, to whom, it is presumed, the following notice has reference: “1652, Nov. 30th. Alice Flint was presented for wearing a silk hood; but proving herself to be worth £200, she was excused.”—*FELT’S Annals of Salem*, p. 188.

On p. 317, Mr. Felt states that this John Pickering “was frequently of the Selectmen [of Salem]. He was a capable, enterprising, and public-spirited man.” O. P.

vessel ; that off Cape Breton, in calm weather, he was attacked by a shallop containing about thirty Frenchmen. When the enemy approached, the crew were for surrendering, being only six or seven in number ; but, as they had each a musket, and their vessel was fixed with *close quarters*, William Pickering, the master, told them, if they would only load the guns, he would fire them all himself. They did so. As the Frenchmen rowed up astern and came within musket-shot, he began to fire out of the cabin windows. They rowed the faster ; but he continued firing till they got up to the stern ; then he shut fast the cabin windows, and they all ran forward to the fore-castle, in which were loopholes. By the time they had reached the fore-castle, the Frenchmen were climbing up over the stern. He renewed his fire, and, in the whole defence of his vessel, killed and wounded so many, that the survivors took to their shallop, and rowed off as expeditiously as possible. This signal act of bravery and good conduct procured him great applause, and occasioned his appointment to the command of the *Boston Galley*, a ship which had been provided and armed by the Province of Massachusetts for the protection of its commerce.* . . .

“ ‘It rests on my mind, that, when a boy, my father told me that my first American ancestor (I mean the

* “August, 1707. Wm. Pickering is commissioned to command a vessel for protecting the fishery at Cape Sable against the French and Indians.” — FELT’S *Annals of Salem*, p. 344.

“Mar. 16th, 1711. Wm. Pickering is appointed by the Governour to command the Province Galley. He had been captain of her previously.” — *Ibid.* p. 353.

Colonel Pickering relates another anecdote, derived from his father, respecting the same William Pickering, as follows : “Being afflicted with a corn on one of his toes, he went to a joiner’s shop, . . . put his foot on a block, and, taking up a mallet and chisel, struck off the offending toe ! An instance of hardihood extremely rare.” — COLONEL PICKERING’S *Memorandum-Book*. O. P.

John Pickering who came from Old England) made a journey from Salem to Connecticut, with a view to find land for a plantation on which he might settle; but, returning in the winter season, his feet and legs got frozen, which, rendering him a cripple for life, put an end to the project.

“The lot of land on which my brother [John Pickering] now dwells has for a long period belonged to the family.* . . .

“My father,† by a life of great industry and frugality, added to his paternal estate. His daughters were decently educated according to the custom of the times; and to his two sons he gave a regular education at the Grammar School‡ in Salem, and afterwards at Harvard College.

“The tenor of my father’s life was directed by his opinion of *the equal rights of all mankind*. Hence the dishonest or improper conduct of the men possessed of power or wealth was censured without reserve,

* “It was purchased by the first settler [John Pickering] in 1642, who built upon it a wooden house, of which the frame is in part still standing, and in a sound condition.” J. P. It is now owned and occupied by John Pickering, a grandson of Colonel Pickering. O. P.

† Colonel Pickering’s grandfather, John Pickering, “was Selectman [of Salem] and Representative in the legislature. His decease was a loss to the community.” — FELT’S *Annals of Salem*, p. 374.

Theophilus, a son of the above-named John Pickering, “was educated at Harvard College, Cambridge, and became a minister of the gospel. He was settled at the parish of Chebacco [now the town of Essex], in the town of Ipswich, Massachusetts. He lived a bachelor, and was remarkable for the moderation and coolness of his temper and his steadiness of conduct, when the country were running, with fanatic zeal, after the celebrated itinerant preacher, George Whitefield, whom and whose followers, in a pamphlet or two, he firmly opposed. He was also noted for his mechanic genius, and the nice order in which all his affairs were put and preserved.” — COLONEL PICKERING’S *Memorandum-Book*. O. P.

‡ Taught, while Mr. Pickering was preparing for College, by William Walter, from July 19th, 1756, to September 6th, 1758, and by Daniel Epes, who succeeded Walter, October 8th, 1758. O. P.

while he was disposed to apologize for the poor and uninformed. All his actions showed that he deemed VIRTUE *alone entitled to respect*. He used often to repeat the words of Solomon, — “The *fear of man* bringeth a snare.”

“Invincibly pursuing the calls of rigid justice, he always complained of the wrongs done to widows, and orphans, and salary-men, who were deeply injured by the depreciation of the paper money of the Province of Massachusetts; an injury which he thought the Province bound in justice to repair, and which he urged upon all who fell in his way, who had any influence in the affairs of government.

“The *emancipation of the enslaved Africans* was another favorite topic* which he dwelt upon whilst he lived; and he lived long enough to see it beginning to take place, *in fact*, in the Province of Massachusetts, soon after the commencement of the late Revolution, which ended in the establishment of the Independence of the United States. It was not until the Constitution of Massachusetts was new modelled, in 1780, that in that State slavery was abolished,† the judges of the Supreme Court pronouncing that all men held in slavery, dwelling within that State, were by the Constitution made free; grounding their opinion on the first clause of the Declaration of Rights, — “*All men are born free and equal*.”

“My father enjoyed almost uninterrupted health until about a year before his death [in 1778], when

* “1755, Mar. 10. — Deacon Timothy Pickering is empowered by the town to petition General Court, in their behalf, against the importation of negroes.” — FELT’S *Annals of Salem* (edit. 1849), vol. ii. p. 416. O. P.

† “In 1769, a slave, named James, sued his master, Richard Lechmere, of Cambridge, and gained his cause. This was prior to the noted decision in the King’s Bench, which liberated James Somerset.” — *Ibid.* O. P.

he fell into a decline, attended with a consumptive cough.* My mother survived my father several years. I saw her, for the last time, in February, 1784. At parting she said "she should never see me again;" and so it happened.'

"One further extract from these notes will be made, in relation to Colonel Pickering himself and his immediate family.

"On the 8th of April, 1776, he married Rebecca White, who was born at Bristol, in England, on the 18th of July, 1754. She was the daughter of Benjamin White, a native of Boston, who, following the sea, became engaged in the British navy. . . . In the war of that period between Great Britain and France, he went to the East Indies, master of the *Weymouth*, a sixty-four gun ship [in the fleet of Admiral Cornish]. He was at the taking of Manilla from the Spaniards, and entitled to a share of the money [four million dollars] stipulated to be paid for its ransom; but the cause was, it seems, finally abandoned by the British court, and no part of the ransom was ever recovered by the captors.'"†

Here terminates the portion of this Memoir prepared by John Pickering.

* Colonel Pickering used to relate with satisfaction the following anecdote: When his father, at an advanced age, was setting out young apple-trees, to form an orchard, some one asked him why he took that trouble, intimating that he was performing a labor from which he would derive no benefit, as in all probability he would not live to partake of the fruit. His reply was, "It will do somebody good." O. P.

† See, on this subject, the letters of "Junius" to Sir William Draper, who commanded the land forces. "Your own Manilla ransom most dishonorably given up. . . . When you returned to Europe you zealously undertook the cause of that gallant army, by whose bravery at Manilla your own fortune had been established. You complained, you threatened, you even appealed to the public in print. By what accident did it happen, that in the midst of all this bustle and all these clamors for justice to your injured troops, the

Timothy Pickering was admitted into the Freshman class in Harvard College on the 20th of July, 1759, being then fourteen years of age, and was graduated in 1763. The rank which he held in point of scholarship is believed to have been creditable to him; at least in his first year (April, 1760), books were given to him and to three others of his class, as testimonials of merit. It is true he often lamented the little proficiency he had made in his early years. Thus in 1777, in a letter to his wife, he says, "I only regret that I have so little improved Heaven's invaluable gifts, notwithstanding all the opportunities with which by a kind parent's care I was so long indulged. Indeed, I am mortified at nothing so much, in my past life, as my neglect of the means in my hands of increasing my knowledge:" but he adds, "Yet I have been less idle than many." In fact, to persons conversant with the history of the College, it must be apparent that the failure of the scholars to make great advances in learning was owing, in a considerable degree, to the imperfect system of education then in operation.

The class of 1763 was remarkable for the number of its members who rose to eminence in after life. Among them were Samson Salter Blowers, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia; Jonathan Bliss, Chief Justice, and Joshua Upham, Associate Justice, of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick; Nathan Cushing, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; and Josiah Quincy, Junior, renowned

name of the Manilla ransom was *suddenly buried* in a profound, and, since that time, an uninterrupted, silence? Did the ministry suggest any *motives to you strong enough to tempt a man of honor to desert and betray* the cause of his fellow-soldiers?" — *Letters of Junius*, Letter 3d. See also Letters 4th and 25th.

as a whig in the American Revolution. The degree of Master of Arts was conferred on Mr. Pickering in 1766.*

The following letter, written by him, in the eighteenth year of his age, and while a member of the Senior class at Harvard College, is given as being the earliest speci-

* From the handwriting and some other circumstances, it is presumed that the following reminiscences of his college life were committed by him to paper but a short time before his decease: —

“HARVARD COLLEGE.

“In 1759 there were four public buildings: The Old College [Harvard Hall], burnt in the year [1764], Massachusetts, Stoughton,† and Holden Chapel.

“In Old Harvard, the middle room in the lower story, the whole breadth of the building, was the hall where all dined in commons. Every scholar carried to the dining-table his own knife and fork, and, when he had dined, wiped them on the table-cloth. There were six scholars to a mess. The standing dish was fresh beef baked, — now and then a plain, hard, Indian-meal pudding, — and a baked plum pudding once a quarter. For supper they had their choice, to enter (probably at the beginning of each quarter) for meat or pies, or for a pint of milk and a size of bread. For want of room in the colleges, I boarded in private houses during the two first years. The scholars residing in the colleges provided their own breakfast in their chambers, and their tea in the afternoon. The south-east corner of the lower story (of course fronting the yard) was occupied by the butler; of whom were to be purchased bread, butter, eggs, and, I suppose, some articles which are now called groceries. But at the commencement of each quarter I carried with me, from home, tea, coffee roasted and ground, and chocolate, to supply me for the quarter.

“The north-east corner of the lower story was occupied for a kitchen.

“Over the buttery was the chamber occupied by the old tutor, always called Old Hancock,‡ whose mother said ‘he had [a head] big enough for a councillor.’ But it did not abound in brains.

“In the middle space of the second story, over the dining-hall, was the college library, and a few very ordinary articles for a museum.

“The western chamber was occupied by Professor Winthrop when delivering his lectures and exhibiting some experiments in Natural Philosophy. The other parts of Old Harvard, (including the cocklofts, I believe, which constituted the third story,) consisted of rooms for the scholars.

† A diagram by Colonel Pickering places old Stoughton Hall about in a line with Hollis Hall, and fronting on the College yard between Harvard and Massachusetts Halls.

‡ He was graduated in 1727, and was a tutor from 1742 to 1767.

men of his composition that has been preserved. The amusingly grave answer of his pious father, a deacon of one of the churches in Salem, is indicative of the religious instruction Mr. Pickering received in his childhood and youth; which, although when

“Professor Wigglesworth read his theological lectures in the dining-hall. I recollect that in one of them he recommended the reading of Archbishop Tillotson’s works, but with a caution *to beware of his heresies*.

“Holden Chapel was a building of one story, in which all the scholars (in and out of college) assembled for prayers, morning and evening. On either side of the middle aisle were ranges of seats, with backs, (made wholly of oaken wood,) and rising one above another to the side walls. The door was at the western end, and the pulpit, or raised seat for the President, at the eastern end. In this room also were delivered the short declamations which were required of scholars after the Freshman year, — perhaps three or four in the whole collegiate course.

“The next oldest tutor was Mr. Marsh, who occupied the southern chamber of the second story in Stoughton Hall; the third was Dr. Kneeland, who occupied the north-western room in the second story of Massachusetts Hall; and the fourth was Mr. Thayer (who also occupied some chamber in Massachusetts Hall), father of the present Dr. Thayer, of Lancaster.

“The President’s field (lying north of his house and the meeting-house) was in grass; and when mowed, it was the business of the Freshman class to make the hay.

“The building of Hollis Hall was commenced in 1759. The master mason was Colonel Dawes, father of the late Judge Dawes, of Boston.

“The course of education, as it took place in Dr. Kneeland’s class (that to which I belonged), was as follows: —

“1. Reciting, without translations, Tully’s Select Orations, — the same which had been read at school.

“2. Some (perhaps six or eight) of the books of Virgil’s *Æneid*, — forty or fifty lines prescribed for a lesson, — recited with oral translations.

“3. The Greek Testament we went through.

“To teach us to reason in syllogisms, we read Brattle’s *Logic*, a pamphlet in the Latin language. And at a later period we read, in part, Wollebius’s *Divinity*, a duodecimo volume, also in Latin, of which an edition was printed in England, and imported, for the use of the College.

“In the Sophomore year we read Gordon’s *Geography*, an octavo volume of moderate size; and we were required to commit to memory, and repeat, whole paragraphs, descriptive of different countries, and of any extraordinary things they contained. For an instance of the latter, Gordon, on that district of Africa called Biledulgerid, mentioned the ostrich, their rapidity in running, and their size, saying, ‘They were as tall as men on horseback.’ A very stupid member of the class, shutting up his book, and with a vacant face and monotonous

a young man he discarded the more rigid tenets of his father, had a marked influence on his conduct through life.

HONOURED SIR: It is the common opinion of people that to play a game at cards is (almost) an unpardonable crime. But what renders it more odious than other diversions? Is it because more time is spent in it than in other diversions? But why is more time spent? Because this is a pleasanter and more sociable entertainment. And what makes it so entertaining in general is, that less pains and care need be used than in some other diversions; whereas in playing checkers, instead of unbending the mind, after its labour, there is more thought and care to be used, and so can be no relief to the tired intellect. Besides, it is a dull, unsociable business; and a stranger would rather think they were exercised with a fit of the spleen, than a diversion, to see them poring upon a piece of board,

onous voice, attempting to recite the passage, uttered these words: 'The inhabitants of Biledulgerid are as tall as men on horseback.'*

"I think it was in the latter part of the Sophomore year, or fore part of the next year, we read Locke on the Human Understanding. Of this work also we were required to commit whole paragraphs to memory, and to repeat them to the tutor. This mode saved both the tutor and the scholar the trouble of *thinking*, — one to ask and the other to answer questions on the author's doctrines.

"In the third year we began to read Desaguliers's Natural Philosophy, — the lessons prescribed, — and recited (I do not recollect the manner) to the tutor. In the third year also, I think, we entered on Euclid's Elements of Geometry, and went through the five first books. This was to me a very pleasing study, arising from the ingenious arrangement of the problems to be solved, — all the preceding preparing for the solution of the following. In the third, as well as the fourth year, I think, we were admitted to Professor Winthrop's chamber, . . . to attend his lectures and experiments in Natural Philosophy. Mr. Winthrop also attended the class a few times when they were learning Arithmetic, — Ward's Mathematics, the book prescribed for the scholars' use. He touched on a few matters rapidly, — the subjects, of

* This anecdote derives its interest from a circumstance which Colonel Pickering seems to have omitted inadvertently, being an early notice of the seriousness which characterized his classmate, Josiah Quincy, Junior. The student's blunder having provoked a general laugh, the tutor exclaimed (in Latin, supposed to be the language of the recitation-room), "*Etiam Quincy ridet.*"

and looking with as much intenseness of thought as if the fate of empires depended upon the right forming their plan.

People are apt to say that cards, as it were, intoxicate those that use them, and that thereby they squander away their money; that they are a thief of time; are apt to raise disputes, &c. But what one thing is there which may not be used to excess? Are not other diversions subject to the same evils, if practised beyond measure and prudence? Why then so great an outcry against cards, as if they were the only evil? Even the diversion of checkers may be abused; and may persons game and spend their time and money at one, so may they at the other.

I would not forget to acquaint you, Sir, that you were misinformed with regard to my playing cards; and am sorry I have been the cause (through the ignorance of that block-head) of any trouble or uneasiness in the breast of so kind, so loving a father, from whom any gentle admonitions,

course, very familiar to him, — but to the novitiates ‘it was all Greek.’ We derived no benefit from his remarks.

“Such was the miserable course of education with Dr. Kneeland’s class; and now I never see Dr. Hedge (since I learned that he was his son-in-law) but I think of, and not without some indignant feelings towards, his father-in-law, in suffering four years to be in a great measure wasted in reading the few books above mentioned, while he was studying and practising physic. In some other classes, some of the first books of Homer’s *Iliad* were read. But the New Testament was all the Greek, and Cicero’s Select Orations and six or eight books of Virgil’s *Æneid* were all the Latin, we were required to learn, for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of those languages.”

In a memorandum, made by one of Colonel Pickering’s friends, of a conversation with him in October, 1828, he is represented as saying that he was obliged to write syllogisms; that about twice a year he declaimed short pieces of his own writing; and that this was all the composition in English, and all the declamation, that were required of him; and that at every Commencement the President (Holyoke) made an address in Latin. It is not improbable that this conversation led Colonel Pickering to put in writing his recollections of the College as above quoted.

In an old account-book his whole expense at College (not including clothing and “the expense at Commencement”) is set down at £121 1s. 9d. lawful money, equivalent to \$406.45. The penalty of the bond given as security for the payment of his quarter bills, “viz., the steward’s, glazier’s, and sweeper’s bills,” was £15 lawful money.

reproofs, or advice would be received with that respect and regard due to so affectionate a father by your dutiful son,

TIMO. PICKERING.

H. C. [HARVARD COLLEGE], February 14th, 1763.

His father replied, —

DEAR SON: Serious men of large experience have apprehended that the diversion of playing at cards (all things considered) is not expedient. Pike and Hayward write upon it, as you may see, in their Cases of Conscience judiciously resolved. However pleasant the exercise may seem to be to many, yet it is found to be of enchanting nature. I hope, above all things, you will seek spiritual delights, for they are not only most ravishing, but also most essential. All mankind naturally most affect things of sense; but how amazing is it, that rational creatures should so much affect earthly pleasures, and neglect the pursuit of those joys that are eternal! You know my mind. You have now a price in your hand to get wisdom. I hope God will give you an heart to improve it.

We are all in health, through God's goodness, and hope these lines may find you so. Let us hear from you in convenient time.

Your affectionate father,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

SALEM, February 18th, 1763.

Playing at cards would have been a waste of time for one so much occupied in public business and so fond of reading and conversation as Mr. Pickering was; but I have an impression of seeing him once, and only once, take a hand at whist.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Pickering assists the Register of Deeds. — Cultivates Music. — His Manner of Reading. — His Style of Composition. — His Services in the Militia. — Condition of the Militia. — He puts an End to a disorderly Practice of Firing. — Becomes a leading Whig in Salem. — Vindicates himself from Reproaches of Tories.

IMMEDIATELY after leaving college, Mr. Pickering began to write as a clerk in the office of John Higginson, Register of Deeds for the County of Essex, assisting him almost constantly for more than two years, and occasionally afterwards until 1774. During the same period, Mr. Higginson was likewise the Town Clerk of Salem; and in the performance of the duties of this office he received frequent aid from Mr. Pickering.

While a young man, Mr. Pickering devoted much time to the cultivation of music. He had a nice ear, a soft and pleasing voice, and correct taste. It appears that he was the owner of a spinet, and that he took a few lessons on the violin; and in 1764 and the two following years he gave instruction in sacred music to classes in Salem and Marblehead. In 1808 he received a letter from the Reverend John Cushing, of Ashburnham, who graduated at Harvard College one year after him, in which the writer, endeavoring to bring himself to Mr. Pickering's remembrance, says, "I was one who attended upon the instructions of ~~old~~ Mr. Manning to learn to sing, when I was junior, and near a dozen of my classmates. But we were more indebted to you for our instruction than to our master.

You were the first that introduced treble. Epes Sargent and Benjamin Goodhue, with their boy voices, sung it, and as well as females." Mr. Pickering was fond of simple music, and had an aversion to pieces which excited wonder by the mere rapidity and difficulty of execution.*

The same sensibility to harmony led him to pay great attention to his manner of reading aloud, and to his style in composition. His hearers, whether he read prose or poetry, were charmed with the just modulation of his voice, and, where the passage demanded an exhibition of emotion, its expressive intonations; too readily, indeed, would a generous or a pathetic sentiment choke his utterance and suffuse his eyes with tears.† In writing, while he deemed perspicuity to be of paramount importance to every other quality in style, he aimed at making his periods agreeable to the ear; and in this respect, as well as in precision and

* On this point he was sustained by the high authority of Dr. Burney, from whose "Present State of Music in France and Italy," (2d edit., vol. iii. pp. 108, 109,) he made the following extracts. Mentioning a convent in Italy, and the singing of the nuns, Dr. Burney says: — "One of them had an excellent voice; full, rich, sweet, and flexible, with a true shake and expression; it was delightful, and left nothing to wish but duration." Then he adds: — "Besides the organ in this convent for choruses, there was an organ and harpsichord together, which was likewise played by one of the nuns; and the accompaniment of that instrument alone, with the heavenly voice above mentioned, pleased me beyond description; and not so much by what it *did*, as by what it did *not* do: surely one cannot hear too much of such a mellifluous voice. All the jargon of different parts, of labored contrivance, and difficult execution, is little better than an ugly mask upon a beautiful face; even harmony itself, upon such occasions, is an evil, when it becomes a sovereign instead of a subject."

† On hearing a discourse in the pulpit indifferently pronounced, he said he would willingly excuse a clergyman from writing a sermon, provided he would only *read well* a good one from a printed volume. Doubtless, in most cases, a congregation would derive equal benefit from the services of their pastor, and at the same time promote his health and comfort, if, instead of tasking his brain to produce two original sermons a week, they would be content with one original sermon and one selected.

purity of language, force of expression and grammatical accuracy, he was excelled by few of our writers whom the American Revolution brought into notice.

In January, 1766, Mr. Pickering was commissioned by Governor Bernard as lieutenant of the fourth military company of foot in Salem, in the first regiment of militia in the county of Essex; and in May, 1769, as captain of the same company. The character of his mind disposed him to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the duties of any office which he might take upon himself; and, in addition, the critical relation of the Colonies to the mother country impressed upon him the necessity of having a well drilled and disciplined militia. Accordingly, he devoted much time to the study of the military art.

In 1769, still a lieutenant, but assuming the character of a very old man, he published two pieces signed "A Military Citizen."* In them he urges the importance of putting the militia of the Province on a better footing, and points out means for accomplishing that end. He observes, that formerly not one officer in five was tolerably versed in the manual exercise and the simple evolutions. He describes the proceedings which had been usual for many years on training-days. The companies were called out four days in the year. He says:—

"The men were ordered to assemble at nine o'clock; and perhaps by ten they were all mustered. About this time also the officers might make their pompous entrance on the parade. . . . The men were ordered to form; and by the time this was effected, and the various disputes among the men as to their places, according to each man's humor, and such like important matters, were adjusted, the clock

* In the "Essex Gazette" of the 31st of January and 21st of February.

might strike eleven. Then the roll was called. . . . If the training-field was not also the place of parade, they wheeled their divisions and began their march majestically slow. And here the notable achievements of some intrepid soldiers must not be passed over in silence. Did any awkward or uncommon figure of a man come in sight of these heroes, by a sudden excursion they surprised, surrounded, and for a while buried him in fire and smoke; then, with self-approving shouts, and breasts glowing with the thoughts of their valorous deeds, they made a gallant retreat, and again joined the main body. But never did these undaunted souls breathe more heroic ardor, than when some *harmless maid*, some *modest fair*, drawn by the irresistible power of curiosity to see these public *shows*, made her appearance. Then they summoned all their courage, then they exerted all their fire, to fill with dire alarms her *tender breast*.

“At length they arrived at the place of exercise, and were . . . ready for business by half after eleven, or twelve, o’clock. Then, if any officer of the company had learnt the words of command for the manual exercise, they were given to the soldiers; and sometimes, perhaps, a posture-master was set for their imitation. . . . This sometimes was repeated; and by that time it was necessary to dismiss the men; which, after a volley or two, was accordingly done. Thus ended the forenoon.

“The officers, &c., then retired to a tavern, where an elegant entertainment was prepared, and wine and punch went round. . . . By half after three . . . they were tolerably recruited; and by four the men might be again under arms, and were exercised as before. At five o’clock they might return to the parade, or to the officers’ quarters, where the treat, random fire, and reiterated volleys finished the exercises of the day. . . .

“One day was commonly spent in firing at a mark; and, as for the remaining two, the operations were like those before described, in the *forenoon*. But the *afternoons* were more notably distinguished.”

Then, he says, a troop of horse charge fiercely a body of foot.

“The foot divide and open a passage for the bounding steeds. The horse drive furious through the lengthened lane, beset on either side with fire and smoke. . . . Then they renew the fight with redoubled ardor. After this a third attack closes the *dusty* scene. The parties retreat to seek refreshment.”

To keep *such* a militia on foot, Mr. Pickering regards as an injury to the Province ; a mischievous expense of time, of money, and of ammunition, promoting a disregard of all order. To correct the evils, he recommends that the officers should acquaint themselves with military discipline ; should meet at certain times for mutual instruction ; and should inform the sergeants of everything belonging to the duty of a soldier and to their offices, so that they also may be able to teach.

“If the methods of teaching prescribed in the *Norfolk Exercise* be observed, particularly to do it at first in small parties, where the motion of every man may be seen and every error corrected, they will make a surprising progress in a short time. And as the men will by this means be fully employed, they will have neither time nor inclination to commit the many disorders before mentioned. . . .

“These are observations founded in fact and experience. . . . The officers and sergeants of the several companies [in Salem], it seems, have taken pains to acquaint themselves with all the parts of exercise most necessary for a militia to understand, to wit, the manual exercise and most usual evolutions. And the effects are answerable. Their militia, I have been told, is the best in the Province, and perhaps in America ; not only for their military skill, but also for their good order and regularity of behavior. But I am further informed, that these officers have not stopped here, but still continue

to meet frequently for conversing about, and perfecting themselves in, military matters, that they may the better discharge the duty of their offices. . . . And [the foregoing method] may now be practised with greater success than ever, as the militia officers have an opportunity of seeing regular troops ; from whom, by an attentive observation, they may gather many useful hints, to facilitate their instructing the militia ; (and *fas est et ab hoste doceri.*)”

He observes, that it behooves men of fortune, weight, and figure, more than others, to countenance military exercises ; to take offices in the militia ; and this, in order to do their country service, and not, as many did, merely to obtain titles of honor ; that the neglect of gentlemen accepting commissions, however, to qualify themselves to perform their duties, “makes room for the operation of one provision in the Militia Act, in case of alarm ; for at such a time the chief officer . . . of each regiment, then within the limits of it, is under no necessity . . . to go forth with his regiment . . . to meet the enemy, but may appoint, by writing under his hand, some fit person to take his place — *a prudent provision ;*” * and that, in consequence of the unconcern of men of influence and abilities about offices in the militia, commissions have sometimes descended into the lowest hands, and in such cases the militia becomes truly contemptible.

He further observes : —

“While the French had footing in North America, we were perpetually harassed by them, and by the Indians through their instigations. But the attacks made by these were in the Indian manner ; and, to cope with them, no other discipline was necessary than being good marksmen and dexterous in skulking behind trees and bushes. . . . In the

* Provincial Act of 1699, 12 William III., c. 1.

late war, Great Britain and the Colonies, with their united force, have entirely subdued the French in North America. Yes, (God be praised !) we have at length, after many successful efforts, expelled those eternal disturbers of *our* peace as well as of the peace of Europe."

In a future war with Great Britain, he says, France will most likely make attacks against our seaports, and her regular troops must be met by a well-disciplined militia, until succor shall arrive from the mother country.

Although Mr. Pickering makes France the ostensible enemy to be opposed by a well-disciplined militia, the irritation then prevailing here against Great Britain, and the significant Latin quotation, sufficiently intimate that he was sounding notes of preparation in view of a possible conflict with the mother country, in defence of the rights of the American Colonies.

The "military skill" and the "good order" of the Salem militia, which received the commendation of Mr. Pickering when writing anonymously, it will readily be imagined, were due in a great measure to his own exertions.

The disorderly practice, above mentioned, of firing towards individuals, was suppressed through much effort on the part of Mr. Pickering, as related by him in an article in the "Essex Gazette" in 1770. His chief object in that article, however, it will be seen, was to vindicate himself from a virulent Tory attack upon his conduct and character. Certain pieces, signed "Nauticus," published in that paper,* giving an unfavorable "sketch of the behavior and disposition of those people [in Salem] called Tories," were ascribed, but erroneously, to him. A reply appeared under the

* September 4th and 18th, and October 9th, 1770.

signature of "Y.," in which, addressing "Nauticus," (meaning Mr. Pickering,) the writer says:—

"There was a time when the friends of government were your friends; and, if your opinions are since changed, be not ashamed to confess, that to popular favor you look for subsistence. To stem the torrent of political detraction, and boldly to avow sentiments which derive honor to you only from their truth, in compensation for the malevolence of party, was once your boast; but the prospect is now changed; empty praise was your reward; sincerity brought no emolument; and 'Nauticus' found, to his sorrow, that, in these degenerate days, to be good was not to be great. . . . You will not blush to declare, that, allured by a consideration which influences the greater part of mankind, and none more than the herd of *clamorous patriots*, you espoused a contrary cause. . . . The dread of shame was an obstacle which I congratulate you on having surmounted; . . . you may now enjoy the wished-for applause, and reap the virtuous satisfaction of having bartered honesty for interest. . . . I leave you for ever to the uninterrupted possession of that happiness which can result from a consciousness of having stooped to the lowest fraud for the vilest purpose, sincerely wishing you every reward that divine or human justice shall annex to successful perfidy." *

Giving an absurd construction to a remark of "Nauticus," this writer also accused him of atheism.

Mr. Pickering, having evidence that these reproaches were aimed at him, answered them under his own name, examining the principles, pretensions, and conduct of the Tories, so far as he thought it necessary for his own vindication.† He says:—

"The *Tories*, the *better sort*, the *friends of government*, all which terms denote but one party in Salem, are possessed with this false notion, — that among more than a thousand

* "Essex Gazette," Sept. 25th, 1770. † Ibid. Oct. 16th, 23d, and 30th.

Whigs in this town, there is but *one* of abilities sufficient to write the pieces signed ‘Nauticus’: else why are they so unwilling to believe me? since I have positively denied *my* being the author. But, though my private asseverations have not been fully credited, possibly an open, public declaration will ease their doubting minds. I therefore, in this public manner, declare, that I am not the author of the pieces signed ‘Nauticus’; neither was I directly or indirectly concerned in writing them or any of them.”

In conjecturing the reason which induced “Y.” to enter the lists with “Nauticus,” Mr. Pickering says:—

“It appears to be this: ‘Y.,’ firmly believing that I was the author of the first piece signed ‘Nauticus,’ and being conscious that every material fact therein related was true, in *revenge* for my *supposed* boldness, determined to form a character completely infamous, and then palm it upon the world as an exact portrait of my mind and actions.”

To the allegation that he had surmounted “the dread of shame,” he replies:—

“As there never was a moment in my life in which I did not glory in the cause of liberty, . . . that cause in which the body of the people in Salem, in this Province, and in all America, are so zealously engaged, shame for espousing it could not possibly exist.”

On “Y’s” imprecation, that “Nauticus” may enjoy “every reward that divine or human justice shall annex to successful perfidy,” he remarks:—

“This is the *coup de grâce*,—the completion and perfection of another wish openly pronounced by a Tory. Understanding that two brothers * had been a little unwell, ‘It is a pity,’ says he, ‘they had not both died; they are a couple of worthless fellows!’ And what could in-

* Mr. Pickering and his brother, John Pickering, Junior.

duce him to frame this wish? The brothers had never hurt a hair of his head, nor spoken of him one disrespectful word. It could proceed only from a hellish spirit of revenge, because they had virtue enough to disregard the opinions of the *great*, (who are not always *wise*,) when they thought them incompatible with the liberty and happiness of the people; and because the Tories had not been able (according to their hopes) to amass all knowledge and learning to themselves.* But this was a vain, ridiculous expectation; for, if the people are not scholars and eloquent orators, they can think justly, and act firmly and vigorously, with the spirit of men and of Englishmen. Similar to these was another wish of a Tory, — ‘I wish to the Lord the whole town of Boston might sink this moment.’ (He had just heard they had passed, or were about to pass, some firm resolves.) These kind expressions of love to their neighbor, for the causes above assigned, — the frequent practice of the *better sort* in all nations, — together with the declaration of another Tory, ‘that too many persons among us had liberal educations,’ — afford the strongest presumption, that, if it were in their power, the Tories would deprive the people of knowledge, and reduce them to a state of absolute ignorance; ignorance being truly the mother of *slavery*, though not of *devotion*.”

Mr. Pickering comments on the arrogance and affectation of the Tories in calling themselves *friends of government*, and asks, —

“For whom was government instituted? Was it solely for the aggrandizement of those few, who, by some fortunate accident, have been bred in a manner which the world calls *genteel*? or to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the body of the people? Is government supported by the *better sort*? On the contrary, has not

* Mr. Pickering and his brother seem to have been almost the only persons in Salem, of a *college* education, who took a *prominent* part in Whig measures before the commencement of the Revolution.

every attack on the laws and constitution proceeded from that class? The very phrase, 'friends to government' is invidious, and carries with it an impudent insinuation that the whole body of the people, the *pretended* friends to government excepted, are *enemies* to government; the bare suggestion of which is as ridiculous as it is false. Let us, for instance, examine this town. There are in Salem about five thousand inhabitants; and, among this number, perhaps forty or fifty of all ranks, sexes, and ages, whom the *Whigs* call *Tories*, and who distinguish themselves by the terms *better sort* and *friends to government*. This pitiful number being deducted, the remaining four thousand nine hundred and fifty are called the *scum of the town*, the *dregs of the people*. . . . Now, can any person of common sense believe, that this whole town, forty or fifty excepted, would be glad to be reduced to the wretched condition I have just mentioned, without government, laws, or order? But perhaps it will be said that this is not the meaning of the Tories when they . . . declare that the body of the people are *enemies* to government, and that all they intend by it is, that the people are unwilling to submit 'to the powers that be.' Why, this, I believe, is *part* of their meaning, and in one sense it is true; and then the case will stand thus: Americans, unwilling to put on the chains of slavery which have been forged for them in the five or six last years, have vigorously opposed the diabolical designs formed against them, and for this have been called *rebels* and *enemies to government*. Though it is my firm belief the king has not, in any part of his dominions, subjects more loyal than the inhabitants of the British Colonies. The Tories among them, on the contrary, (*being better bred*,) have ever stood ready . . . to do what should be thought a *decent* and *respectful* compliance with the benevolent designs of a *wise* and *virtuous* ministry, concerning the freeborn sons of America; and for this have been styled *friends to government*. But they have not been so very obedient and submissive for nothing. We may hence be able to solve the question, . . .

how it comes to pass, that, with but few exceptions, all those among us who, for five or six years past, have been candidates for, or possessed of, offices of honor and profit, have shown themselves such zealous ‘friends to government.’ . . .

“These, then, are the *men*, and this the *cause*, I am said to have deserted. And now, admitting that I was once a friend to both, and that these ‘friends of government’ were once *my* friends, will any honest man — will any free American — blame me for deserting them? I trust not. And, if I am not to blame, then there can be no necessity of imputing my desertion to *sinister views*. . . .

“But ‘Y.’ all along takes for granted, as a fact, what I by no means admit. He supposes that *once* I entirely adopted the political opinions of the Tories. But this I utterly deny. . . . It is true, when we have had accounts of the rising of mobs, and of their cruel treatment of some persons, I have expressed my disapprobation of them, and been provoked with the excessive timidity, the pusillanimity, of others, who have apprehended themselves in danger from them. I have said I would sooner perish on the spot, than fly before a headlong mob attacking me without cause; that a few deaths would rouse the *real* friends to government, and procure solid peace and tranquillity. Also, by my accidental situation for three or four years past, I frequently fell into the company of the *friends of government*, and a considerable share of the conversation turned upon the wicked, selfish motives of some popular leaders, in their opposition to government; (substitute *governor* and *ministry*;) and if what they [the ‘friends of government’] said was true, (and I knew nothing to the contrary,) their [the leaders’] motives, I confess, were bad enough; and I could *then*, and so I can *now*, brand every person acting from such motives only, with the name of villain. And what then? Does all this prove, that I was at any time inclined tamely to acquiesce in every imposition a c t m y [corrupt ministry] should please to lay upon

us; or that I thought the circular letter of the House of Assembly of the Province 'was of an inflammatory nature, tending to create unwarrantable combinations,' and that the House ought to have rescinded the vote which gave rise to that letter;* or that the associations of the merchants and people to prevent the importation of British goods was illegal and unjustifiable?† Are not the cause of American liberty, and the pretended patriotism of its advocates, two entirely distinct things? It is true, by often hearing both so artfully blended together, at a time when I thought but little about the matter, I was sometimes held in suspense; but I never disapproved of the measures above mentioned. . . . If, therefore, I have at no time in my life adopted the political opinions of the Tories, it is too obvious to remark, that I could not *change them*, and *take up other opinions*, although all the offices and all the honors and all the riches of all the Tories in Salem were to be my reward for so doing. . . .

"But there is not only no foundation for 'Y.'s' charges against me, but my whole life, since I appeared on the public stage, has been a contradiction to his slanderous assertions. I appeal to the whole town, I appeal to the Tories themselves, whether, as an officer of the militia for five years past, (in which capacity alone I have had an opportunity 'to stem the torrent' of popular prejudices, 'boldly to avow sentiments which could derive honor to me only from their truth,' and to prove that the *civium ardor prava jubentium* could not shake me from my deliberate purpose,) — whether, I say, in that capacity, I have not manifested an utter disregard to *mere* popular opinions, even though they were riveted and strengthened by immemorial custom. I will instance in the article of *firing*. It had been the custom in Salem from my earliest remembrance, and for fifty or perhaps a hundred years before, to

* Letter of February 11th, 1768. See Marshall's "History of the American Colonies," (edit. of 1824,) pp. 371-376, 472.

† Ibid., p. 385.

fire at the officers, under the senseless notion of doing them honor. And, not content with this, some would fire at all sorts of persons; and it gave them singular satisfaction to make women the objects of their dangerous diversion. Nor did strangers escape the hazard and inconvenience of their inhuman, inhospitable sport. This base custom I set myself to oppose and destroy. The practice appeared to me so foolish and unreasonable, that, young and inexperienced as I was with the manners of men, I had no conception of any difficulty attending the execution of my design. Yet I had no sooner begun to exert myself for that end, than I had, not the soldiers only, but almost the whole town upon my back. I was reproached with being a stiff, obstinate, severe, precise fellow, afraid of gunpowder, a coward, and I know not what. Many who did not approve, but condemned, the firing, thought, as it had been the practice time out of mind, that I was to blame in opposing it. 'But none of these things moved me.' Unintimidated by all the obloquy cast upon me, I still persevered in my design. I found the practice I was endeavoring to eradicate was condemned by many thinking, judicious people. That strengthened my hands; and by degrees I learned to bear unmerited reproach without uneasiness; and at length my endeavors, seconded by some of my brethren, have been crowned with success, to the no small comfort and quiet of the town. That I have not relaxed in my endeavors to form an orderly, well-disciplined militia, maugre all opposition, the whole town is witness. And the last training-day affords a fresh proof, that I have not sought, that I do not seek, popularity by falling in with the prevailing humor and inclination of the people, when that humor and inclination militate with truth, with reason, and, in the instance referred to, with the rules of the military art. What happened on that day is well known in the town, and need not be related.*

* On some occasion a soldier in Mr. Pickering's company saluted him by firing at his feet; whereupon Mr. Pickering struck him with the flat of his sword. It is merely a conjecture that this was "the instance referred to."

“In fine, those who are most intimately acquainted with me *know*, that, at the *expense of popularity*, and *though loaded with reproach*, I have, with undeviating constancy, pursued those measures which I thought and declared to be necessary for forming a militia which should answer the end of its establishment; that my ruling principle was to *serve*, and not to *please*, the militia. But now, if, by proceeding in this manner and on this principle, I have at length obtained an approbation of my conduct, who can be so unjust, who can be so cruel, as to rob me of the only reward of all my labor that is in the power of my fellow-citizens to bestow? Yet, in defiance of all these facts, ‘which were not done in a corner,’ the writer whose signature is ‘Y.’ has, with wanton malice, declared to the world, that for the sake of popular favor I have set at nought my *honor*, my *conscience*, and my *God*.

“But some transactions, during this period, for accomplishing the design above mentioned, deserve to be related, as they will tend to show the vanity and affectation of the Tories in pretending they are better and firmer friends to government than their neighbors, the Whigs.

“About a year and a half ago, some strangers, one of them a woman, and all on horseback, were passing through the town on a training-day morning, just as the soldiers were assembling. They were fired at, and thereby, and by various motions and flourishes of the guns, their horses were excessively frightened, insomuch that the woman was in imminent danger of her life. This gross insult was so highly resented by some gentlemen, by-standers, that they made a regular complaint to a magistrate [a Tory], praying that the offender might be dealt with according to law. But the complaint was rejected, with some strange answers which I have forgot; but the conclusion was, (as the person told me who presented it,) ‘the times won’t bear it;’ or, in other words, it having been an old custom, he [the magistrate] should displease the people. About the same time, a complaint was presented to another magistrate [a

Tory] against another person, for the like offence, by one who is *now* a *Whig*, whatever the Tories may think he was *then*.* But this also was rejected for a reason similar to the former. Another reason, it is true, was added, but, in my humble opinion, a very frivolous one.

“To these instances of denial of justice I might add one, of the actual violation of the laws by some of the ‘friends of government.’ But as ‘Nauticus’ has, in his first essay, given a particular account of it, I shall only mention the chief circumstances of the affair, viz.: ‘A committee of trade from Boston, coming to Salem to take the minds of the people in trade there respecting the importation of goods from Great Britain,’ a person was procured by some of the *friends to government* to carry a message to said committee (in order to terrify and oblige them to leave the town) in these words, or to this effect, viz.: ‘That thirty or forty men were assembled, and were coming to tar and feather them;’ and a letter was also sent them importing the same thing. As the offence was committed against strangers, the Selectmen thought it their prudence and duty to make inquiry into the matter, that the offender might be brought to justice. For this they were, by one of the ‘friends of government,’ called *informers*; and their complaints to the magistrates were utterly disregarded. Upon this I shall only remark, in the words of an excellent writer, that ‘the *great* as well as the *little* vulgar are liable to catch the spirit of mobbing.’

“I would not have it understood that all who are called Tories deserve the same character. . . . Some of them, who are in office, discharge their trusts with ability and fidelity; and I congratulate the public for the happiness it enjoys in that respect. . . . But I think it cannot be thought unreasonable to demand of the Tories, — that they for the future claim no pre-eminence above their fellow-citizens, the Whigs, who are the body of the people, by pretending that the latter are *enemies*, and they themselves

* Meaning himself.

the only *friends* to laws and good government; . . . that they no longer treat with contempt the united voice of a whole continent, nor pretend that the measure almost universally adopted for the preservation of the liberties of America, was rash, imprudent, unjust, oppressive, till they clearly and plainly show it to be so, and point out a better; — that the *friends to government*, instead of studiously avoiding to appear in town-meetings, for the future give their attendance, and, in the debates concerning any public matters, give their opinions *freely*; which, if done with moderation, and with a view to prevent any false steps and imprudent resolutions, I dare to say they will be heard with attention, and, if their proposals are not adopted, at least they will be treated with respect. Will the *true* patriot, the *real* friend to government, because his opinion in politics has been once disregarded, withdraw himself from the community of which he is a member, and, without even giving his advice, suffer his fellow-citizens, (‘at whose proceedings,’ he says, ‘he is alarmed,’) by their hasty, impolitic measures, to plunge themselves and their country into irretrievable ruin? No! — ‘He is the true patriot, whose love for the public is not extinguished, either by their insensibility or ingratitude, but [who] goes on with unwearied benevolence in every public-spirited attempt.’ ”

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Pickering admitted an Attorney at Law. — He instructs Militia of Marblehead. — Applies to be appointed Clerk of the Courts in the County of Essex. — Elected to Municipal Offices. — His Controversy with the Rev. Dr. Whitaker. — His Controversy with Dr. Latham and others about Inoculation for the Small-pox. — His Letter to the Rev. Mr. Weeks.

At the December term of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex, in 1768, Mr. Pickering was admitted an Attorney at Law. I have not been able to ascertain with what barrister or counsellor he pursued his legal studies; perhaps with William Pynchon. He practised but little at the bar, and did not attain to distinction as an advocate; and the various claims upon his time and attention, as well as his own statements, preclude the idea of his having made himself a well-read lawyer. Writing, November 19th, 1773, to one who sought his professional services, he says, —

“I thank you for your good opinion of me, and readiness to intrust me with the care of your affairs mentioned in your letter of the 11th instant. I should be unworthy of that confidence, if I did not confess to you, that I do not pretend to an accurate knowledge of the law, and that several years are elapsed since I applied myself to it; for your sake, therefore, and my own honor, I decline engaging in a matter which may be involved in the intricacies of the law.”

In 1771, a militia company in Marblehead made application to Mr. Pickering to instruct them; to whom he replied, that it would be advisable, in the first place,

to examine whether there were a sufficient number of a determined resolution to persevere in the exercise till they should attain to some good degree of perfection; in which case he would assist them; otherwise it would not be worth while for the company or for himself to make a beginning.*

In the following characteristic letter to Andrew Oliver, one of the Justices of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex, Mr. Pickering expressed a desire to be appointed a joint Clerk, with Mr. Bowditch, of the courts in that county. He had previously made up a portion of the records of the Court of Common Pleas and of the Court of Sessions. He failed, however, of obtaining the appointment.

“SALEM, July 8th, 1772.

“SIR: —

“An application so late as this will not, I hope, be deemed to arise from a want of respect, or be productive of any disadvantage to me; nor an address in writing thought less decent than a personal one. The latter I have sometimes supposed most proper, but several reasons determined me to make the former. In that way I can deliver my sentiments more clearly; and (if they merit consideration) they may be considered more calmly and deliberately. Besides, the request may be granted or denied with more ease both to the petitioner and the judge; for to a benevolent mind it must give pain to refuse even what ought to be refused; and a man of liberal and generous sentiments would choose rather that his justice or his bounty should be manifested in his actions, than in the warmest professions of favor or friendship.

“You must, Sir, ere now apprehend the design of this letter, if you have never heard that I am desirous of being appointed joint Clerk with Mr. Bowditch. This, I find,

* An article by the late Samuel Swett, Esq., in the “Boston Daily Advertiser,” states that the militia of Marblehead were in fact drilled by Mr. Pickering.

would be agreeable to him, and, if I had his leave, would urge it as an argument in my favor. I am sensible, Sir, there are other candidates for the office, who have doubtless severally importuned your favor in their behalf. But permit me, Sir, to say, that I know but one case in which favor can properly take place: that is, where there are two or more candidates of exactly similar pretensions, whose qualifications and circumstances are in nothing different. In any other case, to ask the office as a matter of favor I should think was paying but an ill compliment to the person requested to grant it; for it must impeach either his understanding or his justice. The power of conferring this office, I take it, is vested in the Judges, not to give them an opportunity of gratifying a friend or favorite, but that they should place it in such hands as are most likely to do the public the best service, by an exact and diligent performance of the duties of it.

“Can you forgive this freedom, Sir? I own it is a style unusual from the mouth of a petitioner. But should I address an honest man of delicate sentiments with fawning adulation and servile importunity? Or should I be thought vain, were I to confess myself incapable of using such contemptible means of supplying my wants? Good Sir, after your voluntary, disinterested interposition in my favor in a military concern, (for which I sincerely honor and thank you,) I should esteem it a gross affront with servile submission to sue to you for the office as a matter of favor, except in the case before mentioned. Here, therefore, both for your honor and my own, I choose to rest the matter; and with your determination, be it for or against me, I shall remain satisfied. I request the office merely to procure me a *living*, not to add to thousands already in possession. In my present situation, I must own, I have enough; but without more I shall for ever be excluded from the dearest connection in life. Excuse, I pray you, this liberty; and believe me to be, with sincere respect, your most obedient servant,

TIMOTHY PICKERING, JUN.”

In 1772 and the five following years Mr. Pickering was elected one of the Selectmen and of the Assessors of the town of Salem, and, in 1774 and the two following years, the Town Clerk.

On the 18th of May, 1773, the inhabitants of Salem chose him one of a committee of five persons to consider what was proper to be done respecting a communication from the town of Boston on the *State of the Rights of the Colonists*. A report was made on the 7th of June, being a long letter, draughted by him, to the Boston Committee of Correspondence.* The report asserts the right of towns, in their *corporate* capacity, to meet and represent the grievances which affect the community, and them as parts of it, and to endeavor to get them redressed.

On the 11th of June, 1773, the town voted that the Selectmen should be requested and directed, if occasion should happen, to act as a Committee of Correspondence till the town should choose a special committee for that purpose. On the 17th of May, 1774, such a committee was chosen, consisting of nine persons, Mr. Pickering being one of them. On the 13th of March, 1775, thirty persons, including him, his brother John, and his brothers-in-law George Williams and Israel Dodge, were chosen a Committee of Safety. On the same day a committee of five, including him, was chosen, on minute men and the mounting of field-pieces. The persons on the Committee of Correspondence, elected the 13th of March, were on the 11th of July made a Committee of Safety and Correspondence. Again, on the 16th of October, thirty persons were chosen a Committee of Safety and

* In the "Essex Gazette" of June 6th and 15th, 1773, and the "Boston Gazette" of June 14th.

Correspondence, Mr. Pickering being the one first named. In March, 1776, he was chairman of a Committee (consisting of fifteen persons) of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety. Being a more correct and able writer than most of his associates on these committees, and being always ready to perform more than his share of any labor, the burden of corresponding with other towns fell, of course, chiefly upon him.

These qualities gave him a prominence in some of the local quarrels in Salem and its vicinity; while his exertions to reform abuses exposed him to much calumny.

The Third Church in Salem, of which Mr. Pickering, his father, and three of his brothers-in-law were members, invited, by a unanimous vote, the Rev. Nathaniel Whitaker, D. D., of Norwich, Connecticut, to become their pastor. Dr. Whitaker was desirous of changing the form of their church government from Congregational to Presbyterian; to which change the church gave a qualified assent, reserving to the church and to each member, in case of controversy, the right of appeal to an ecclesiastical council from the vicinity, and to each person the choice of being judged by the "brotherhood," rather than by the minister and elders. In accordance with these terms, Whitaker was settled as their minister in 1769; but he soon exhibited an arrogant and domineering temper, and departed from the spirit of his engagement. In consequence, dissensions arose in the church, and fourteen members manifested a desire, and claimed the right, of returning to unmixed Congregationalism. A long controversy, with crimination and recrimination, was carried on orally and in written correspondence, and at length in the newspapers, between Whitaker, on the one side, and Mr.

Pickering, in behalf of the disaffected members, on the other. The advantage in argument was decidedly with Mr. Pickering. The result of the controversy was, that the connection of himself and others with the church was dissolved in the latter part of 1774 or beginning of 1775: he had, however, as early as 1772, ceased to attend public worship under Whitaker's ministry, being not only disgusted with the conduct and character of the man, but also disliking his Calvinistic doctrines and his style of preaching.

At that time the Trinitarian controversy had not engaged the attention of Mr. Pickering. He had been brought up in the belief of the doctrine of the Trinity, and never heard the truth of it called in question until after he had joined the army in 1777; when one day he was startled by the remark of the late Peter S. Du Ponceau, on some questionable statement, that "he would as soon believe the doctrine of the Trinity." This induced Mr. Pickering to read on the subject, and he thereupon became, and continued through life, a Unitarian. Without bigotry, he was a reverent believer in Christianity, never trifling with things sacred.

In October, 1772, Mr. Pickering asked for a dismissal from Whitaker's church, (the certificate of which dismissal, in the usual form, would have operated as a recommendation of him to other churches;) but it was not granted, Whitaker objecting that he had not given reasons for his request, although at the same time a dismissal was granted to other persons, and no reason demanded. Mr. Pickering inquires, — *

"Why this partiality, Doctor? Was it from a tender concern for me, lest Mr. Dunbar's church should refuse me

* In a "Supplement to the Essex Gazette" of March 15th, 1774.

admission, unless I came recommended from *you* as *sound in the faith* ? On the contrary, Doctor, do you not know, if Mr. Dunbar and his church were as great bigots about points of faith as some I could name, that a recommendation of me as sound in *your* faith would be a fatal bar to my admission *there* ? Did any one object to my moral character ? Did not *you* acknowledge that it stood fair ? ”

Subsequently a hearing before the church was appointed in the case of a dispute between Whitaker and one of the members of his church, and, at the earnest request of the latter, Mr. Pickering consented to attend the meeting. He says, —

“ Before this, Doctor, I had been importuned, by many of the brethren, to lend them my assistance under the difficulties subsisting between you and them. I thought they had been injured, and assured them they should have it. As soon as the meeting was opened, (January 15th, 1773,) you addressed yourself to me, and said I had (at such a time) asked for a dismissal, and you desired to know whether I would not renew my request. I told you I had, at the time referred to, satisfactory reasons for my request ; but now had very good ones for omitting to renew it. You urged the matter with some warmth, wishing, no doubt, *now* to have me dismissed ; but, finding me immovable, you dropped the dispute.”

In a long article in the “Essex Gazette” of March 8th, 1774, Whitaker mentions the disaffection of “Mr. Tim. Pickering, Jun., and his connections, among whom he is, as it were, *all in all*.” He also says, —

“ It is easy to *make men offenders* for a word, and fix on such instances of frailty as are common to men, especially when under great trials and abuses : of these they may find many in me, and perhaps may magnify them into great

crimes ; and even for these I desire to be humbled, as well as for greater faults which lie out of their sight."

He had complained to the elders of his church, that Mr. Pickering had made allegations against his temper and conduct. In Mr. Pickering's reply * is the following passage :—

"You tell the world, Doctor, you have two credible witnesses to prove that I said 'I would not take a dismission from your church till I had got my will, or would tarry there to plague you, or words to that effect.' Considering the manner in which, from undiscerning men, you sometimes extort confessions, I am not surprised at your saying you have such witnesses. But if, instead of two witnesses, you had two hundred, I should not fear to declare I never uttered the words above mentioned. But the phrase 'till I had got my will' indicates such a sentiment as never yet found place in my heart, and therefore, I am confident, never dropped from my tongue. I have told you already for what reasons I declined taking a dismission. They are the true reasons. And 'tis not in your power, Doctor, to prove aught against me which shall induce the public to doubt my sincerity in the declaration. You, and perhaps some other readers, may charge me with vanity for what I have just been saying. But, Doctor, I am ashamed of, I despise, the deep confessions of heinous sins, *without naming one*, which are ever at the tongue's end with some men, who intend, no doubt, by this false humility, to impress on the mind of the hearer a strong sense of the meekness and contrition of their hearts. These confessions are the offspring of gloomy, and sometimes of wicked, minds, and inculcated as the highest duty by priests of the like cast ; in consequence of which, many are induced to make them, even though they belie their own consciences in so doing. But

* In a "Supplement to the Essex Gazette" of March 15th, 1774.

I would not, Doctor, presume to suggest this was your case in your public confession, printed in the last Gazette, where you say, that, besides frailties common to men, you are guilty of greater faults, which lie out of their sight."

A subject in which the people of Salem were deeply interested — inoculation for the small-pox — occasioned another controversy between Dr. Whitaker and Mr. Pickering, in which both parties indulged themselves in personal reflections.*

In September, 1773, the small-pox broke out in Salem. Subscriptions to the amount of £1000 were made, by a number of the inhabitants, for the purpose of erecting a hospital, which was to be entirely under the regulation of the town; and the subscribers were to be reimbursed out of the fees paid by the patients. The hospital was built accordingly, and Mr. Pickering was chosen one of the overseers. Previously to this time, Richard Sutton, in England, had laid claim to improvements in the mode of inoculation and treatment of the disease, for which he was made a baronet; and James Latham, surgeon to the King's (or Eighth) Regiment of foot, professing to be connected with Sutton, was now practising the "Suttonian Inoculation," at Livingston's Manor, "New York Government," and had acquired extensive reputation from dispensing there, and in other parts of America, "the advantages of the above easy and successful method of inoculation." According to this method, the incision was made with a

* See several articles in the "Essex Gazette," — by Whitaker, signed "A Doctor of Divinity," Gazette, November 9th, 1773; by Mr. Pickering, the first of two pieces dated Beverly, November 22d, Gazette, November 23d; by Mr. Pickering, dated Beverly, February 25th, Gazette, March 8th, 1774; by Whitaker, under his name, Gazette, March 22d; and by Mr. Pickering, under the signature of "A Plough-Jogger," in a Supplement to the Gazette, April 5th.

lancet dipped in the small-pox virus, without a thread ; and it was pretended that, in the treatment of the disease, the use of mercury was avoided. In compliance with the general wish of the inhabitants of Salem, Mr. Pickering went, in November, to the Province of New York, and engaged the services of Latham for the hospital. At that time he thought the Suttonian to be the best method of inoculation. A writer, however, in the "*Essex Gazette*,"* freely declared his opinion, that it was a mere imposture, and that Latham and other Suttonians, by their bold pretensions to a mighty secret, to a most extraordinary method of inoculation, were basely practising upon the credulity of the community, in order to fill their pockets ; and he commended the practice of Dr. Hall Jackson, who was inoculating in the hospital belonging to Marblehead. In an answer to this piece, which Mr. Pickering wrote for a Suttonian advocate, but which expressed his own sentiments at the time, he says, "Dr. Latham, I am told, is to attend Salem Hospital. I am content, therefore, to rest the merits of the cause upon the event." Abiding by this test, he changed his opinion of Latham's practice, and conceived it to be his duty to expose it as an imposture. In consequence, he wrote and published a piece signed "A Lover of Truth."† It was soon well known, however, that he was the author, — a fact which he took no pains to conceal. He thus became involved in a newspaper controversy with Latham and his friends, who treated him with much asperity and personal abuse ; to whom he replied, under the same signature of "A Lover of Truth," with more moderation, but yet with a sufficient degree

* Of November 2d, 1773.

† In the "*Essex Gazette*" of February 15th, 1774.

of severity. The following passage, in his fourth number,* testifies to his public spirit and disinterested benevolence:—

“But who could imagine that P. H., of all men, would charge me with a breach of trust? Has he forgot his zealous attempt to apply a fund established for inoculating the poor, to raise the fees of Dr. Latham? to raise them above the sum for which he had agreed to attend the hospital, — a sum already far beyond his merit? and so to pervert the good, the benevolent, the charitable designs of its founders? And must I, must others, be called narrow and contracted because we refused assent? Are my subscribing more largely to the hospital, according to my ability, than many others, and spending nearly the whole of three months in its service without a farthing’s reward, indubitable proofs of a contracted mind? If not, on what do P. H. and his associates ground their bold, injurious assertion? Is it on this, — that I have been less disposed than they to acquire the name of *generous*, by lavishing the public money? to expose the patients to the most unreasonable extortion? and to grind the face of the poor to supply myself with the means of riot and extravagance? Or on this, — that a large portion of my life has been spent in the service of my friends, my fellow-citizens, and my country, without other reward than the actions themselves could yield to a benevolent mind? If these things will not support the charge, I am ignorant where they will fix it.”

In his fifth and last address to the public, as “A Lover of Truth,” † he writes, —

“The important points which, for the safety of my fellow-citizens and countrymen, I have endeavored to establish, are these: —

* In the “Essex Gazette,” March 29th, 1774.

† Ibid., April 12th, 1774.

"1. That, notwithstanding all insinuations and assertions to the contrary, mercury is the basis of the Suttonian method of inoculation.

"2. That the pretensions of the Suttonians to new and immensely valuable discoveries in the art of inoculation, beyond all that was known, not in Europe only, but even in America, were barefaced lies; and, therefore, —

"3. That the Suttonians are a company of impudent impostors, and ought, of consequence, to be marked out to the public as objects of its just abhorrence and contempt.

"4. It appeared to me highly important, that Dr. Latham in particular, as Sutton's chief craftsman in America, and whose practice had been attended with such fatal mischiefs, should be painted in such striking colors, that even the most simple, by his vain boastings, might no more be deluded."

These strong allegations were sustained by satisfactory proofs. Mr. Pickering was ably supported by two of his friends, — the Rev. Asa Dunbar, who published an article signed "A Friend to the Public,"* and Dr. Joseph Orne, who published one or more pieces, under the signature of "Marcellus."† Though Mr. Pickering was aware, when he began the attack on the Suttonian method, that he was on the unpopular side of the question,‡ yet he seems not to have anticipated the outpouring of vituperation and scurrility which were

* "Essex Gazette," March 15th, 1774.

† In the course of the controversy it was intimated, that any substantial improvement in inoculation, as practised by Sutton, had been derived from this country; and "Marcellus" says, "The success of American inoculation has given the amazing reputation which the art deserves and enjoys." — "Essex Gazette," April 12th, 1774. — See also Rees's "Cyclopædia," art. *Inoculation*.

‡ "A Friend to the Public" (the Rev. Mr. Dunbar) says, "The 'Lover of Truth,' therefore, in administering this discipline, though he has been inconsistently accused of seeking popularity, is engaged in an undertaking, which, when he began to write, was almost as unpopular as religion itself."

lavished upon him; and he was chagrined to find it more difficult to change the public opinion than he had imagined, Latham continuing to be upheld by many of the most influential inhabitants of Salem. The following extracts from his correspondence, on this same subject, show his habits of thinking at that time, and how grateful to him was the encouragement he received from his friends.

To his cousin, the Rev. Mr. Weeks, the Episcopal clergyman at Marblehead, he wrote, —

“SALEM, March 2d, 1774.

“ . . . You may remember, a meeting of the subscribers to our hospital was notified in the last week’s ‘Gazette.’ My intention in this was, by a true representation of Latham’s conduct, to get him *cashiered*. But Prince, I suppose, from the little ceremony with which I have long treated his dear crony and brother doctor, suspected my design, and mustered the whole *posse* of Lathamites, — the Curwens, the Pickmans, the Vanses, the Rouths, the Sparhawks, and others of less blustering note. . . . A full meeting was what I desired. But I little expected to stand alone. For, though I had many well-wishers, who had as thorough a contempt for Latham as I, yet some of them never speak in public, and others who do (Mr. Pynchon and Mr. Goodale in particular) were silent as the seats they sat on; and scarcely ten words were spoken against the impudent impostor, but by me. . . . After some other matters were despatched, Latham was brought upon the carpet, and many fine things were spoken in his praise. ‘He was a gentleman, a man of sense, honor, and integrity;’ ’twas he who ‘would do most credit to the hospital;’ nay, one of the herd, who is apt to make fine speeches, declared, ‘that on him the *salvation* of the hospital depended.’ My answers sufficiently intimated the contrary to be true. . . . Curwen said, ‘that pains had been taken to hurt Latham’s character,’ evidently meaning by me. I then informed the

subscribers, that, so far from endeavoring to hurt Dr. Latham, I had concealed many stories I heard, on my journey, to his discredit; because, as people's hearts were set upon him, I was unwilling to throw any discouragements in the way; and I then supposed him well enough qualified for an inoculator. 'What are these stories?' said one and another. 'Let us hear them.' So I rehearsed them. But they were made light of. And yet some, or one, of his adherents asked why they were not told at first. And I have heard, since the meeting, repeatedly, that I am upbraided for concealing those very things, which, after they were made known, and after all or most of Latham's impostures and lies had been clearly detected, did not prevent his being more firmly established, so far as the vote of the subscribers, with only one or two dissenting voices, could do it. Such absurd, such unreasonable conduct would once have surprised me greatly; and I must confess I was disappointed; for I had heard so much fault found with Latham, that I had no conception of a possibility of his being so strongly supported. Nor would he have been, but for his extensive fame, which, though acquired by such dishonest means, numbers were not ashamed to discover their readiness to turn to their own emolument. . . . Since I entered on the public stage, (which was in my twentieth year,) and observed the conduct of mankind, I have seen such, almost daily, examples of inconsistency; of a blind attachment to established customs, however absurd and mischievous, and for attempting to eradicate which I have incurred the reproaches of the people; so much craft; so general a pursuit of wealth and honor, by *any* means; so much pusillanimity; so much of that fear which, as the wise man says, 'bringeth a snare,' — that I blame myself for being surprised at any event which depends on such dishonest, such precarious principles; and which yet, to the disgrace of humanity, and in contempt of the pure and rational religion they so zealously profess to admire, seem to actuate the minds of most men. From these considera-

tions, — and also because my designs to serve my fellow-citizens have been so often frustrated, or their execution has so far fallen short of my intention and my ideas of perfection in those cases, through the perverseness of men, even of those who would receive at least a partial benefit, — I have sometimes been almost sick of the world. For though, by being often calumniated, I have learned to bear unmerited reproach, and may say with truth of my malicious adversaries, that *their shafts fly harmless*, yet it is perhaps impossible for the most heroic absolutely to escape uneasiness. I do not now feel the least pain from the notoriously false charges and vile suggestions against me in the last, and in this week's paper; yet, on the first perusal, I was, for a few moments, in some degree unhappy. Nothing but the uniform, inflexible rectitude of my conduct has supported me. Here, indeed, I have reason to triumph. Every considerable instance of opposition during my life has eventually disgraced my opposers. Latham's zealous, bigoted, interested abettors are already seized with shame and remorse, and confess their errors. I feel more sensibly than ever, that TRUTH is *great and irresistible*; and I enjoy all the pleasures of a complete victory, allayed only by a reflection on the piteous situation of my principal hero.

“As there is an end of poor Latham, if our hospital should be continued we must seek a physician. I have no thought of any but Dr. Jackson, and am informed he is ready to attend on very generous terms. At our March meeting, which, I suppose, will be next Monday sennight, I expect a strong opposition to its continuance; but moderate fees for the physician might have considerable influence on the middling and poor people. I should be glad, therefore, to know the terms on which Dr. Jackson, in the frankness, the generosity, and the humanity of his disposition, would consent to attend.

“Dr. Latham's punishment, though severe, yet I trust you will judge no more than adequate to his offences. With my first piece he was continually tormented. Some of the

Beverly patients told Dr. Orne, that he was often storming about it, and walked the platform several nights in mere rage; and he told Colonel Fowle I was '*a damned rascal.*'* If he was so stung then, what must be his resentment now? If we were in the army, I should expect the fashionable compliment. Whether I shall escape, even here, is a matter of some doubt with me. But, though I should be unwilling to hazard my life with a villain, and think it the highest absurdity to put honor in the balance with a brawny arm, or to measure truth with the length of a sword, and should, therefore, refuse a challenge; and although life is upon the whole agreeable, and I could wish to live for many years to come, yet death is not the most frightful monster; for he who is afraid to die ought to be afraid to live, and must, in fact, be in constant terror. But neither death nor life does much distress *me*. Few are the bands which tie me down to earth, and the principal happiness which here can be enjoyed springs from the social interviews and cordial amity of friends."

To the Rev. Asa Dunbar he wrote as follows, on the 14th of March, 1774, addressing him as "my best friend," and commending him for his disdain of imposture and deceit, and as belonging to a class of persons sometimes called imprudent, because they dare to think for themselves, and to speak what they think.

"This imprudence sometimes runs them into difficulties, through the perverseness of mankind. 'But,' to use the words of Dr. Mead, 'the consciousness of doing right is beyond all praise,' (I add, and superior to censure,) 'carrying with it its own reward; and this he always enjoys who consults the public good, and, by his actions, shows that he thinks he is born, not for himself, but for the whole world.'

* Mr. Pickering was much amused by one of his expressions, namely,—"Damn the 'Lover of Truth.'"

Such sentiments have enabled me, times without number, calmly to bear unmerited reproach. Such sentiments roused the 'Lover of Truth' to action. You know the consequence. But your approbation, the approbation of a mind so enlightened, of a virtuous, brave, and independent spirit, is sufficient to console me for the contempt of half mankind. This may look like flattery: but I speak my sober sentiments. To-morrow you give the world a noble testimony of the motives and manner of my writing.* When I read it, my heart expanded with grateful joy."

The foregoing letter to Mr. Weeks intimates the possibility of a challenge from Dr. Latham. From the following laconic epistles, it may be inferred that, if violence was not designed, it was at least apprehended:—

"SALEM HOSPITAL, March 19th, 1774.

"TO CAPTAIN PICKERING.

"SIR: I beg you will do me the favor to meet me at Mr. Goodhue's tavern, next Monday, about half an hour after eleven o'clock, in the forenoon. If this hour is not convenient for you, please to inform me then (or before) what time after five o'clock, in the afternoon, you can be at leisure to meet me there.

"I am, Sir,

"JAMES LATHAM."

"SALEM, March 21st, 1774, — Morning.

"TO DR. JAMES LATHAM, at Salem Hospital.

"SIR: I have just received your letter, dated at Salem Hospital, the 19th instant, in which you request me to meet you, to-day, at Mr. Goodhue's tavern. I am ignorant of any business you can have there to transact with me. When you have informed me of your design in making

* In a piece signed "A Friend of the Public," in the "Essex Gazette" of March 15th, 1774.

this request, I shall be able to give you a further answer.
At present, I can only assure you that

“I am, Sir,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR.”

These controversies, although of little interest at the present day, were, no doubt, permanently useful to Mr. Pickering, as exercises contributing to give him a facility in composition, and as discipline fitting him to bear, with more equanimity, the undeserved reproaches of political opponents at subsequent periods of his life. One of his antagonists, after the excitement respecting Latham had subsided, testified his regret for the pain he must have given Mr. Pickering by the harsh strictures he had made concerning him; but Mr. Pickering told him they had caused him very little uneasiness. At this statement, the gentleman expressed surprise, for Mr. Pickering's severe remarks, he said, produced quite a different effect upon him. “Yes,” said Mr. Pickering, “and I will tell you the reason: my pen was pointed with truth.”

CHAPTER IV.

Address from Salem to Governor Gage on the Boston Port Bill. —

The Governor's Answer. — Mr. Pickering's Interviews with the Governor. — Arrest of Members of the Salem Committee of Correspondence. — Mr. Pickering elected Register of Deeds; also, a Colonel in the Militia. — Colonel Leslie's Expedition to Salem to seize Cannon.

WHILE taking a prominent part in these local controversies, Mr. Pickering was not inactive in concerns of greater magnitude, affecting deeply all the British Colonies in America. The Boston Port Bill, by which that port was shut against commerce, and the seat of government was transferred from Boston to Salem, went into operation on the 1st of June, 1774. An Address, written by him, and signed by one hundred and twenty-five inhabitants of Salem, and on the 18th of June presented by him to Governor Gage, will be given below. But, as a preliminary, I quote a passage relating to it,* which I presume is from the pen of Edmund Burke: —

“The day after the dissolution of the Assembly, a most pathetic, but, at the same time, firm and manly, Address was presented, from the merchants and freeholders of the town of Salem, to the Governor. We cannot forget that this town was now become the temporary capital of the Province, in the place of Boston; and that the General Assembly, the Courts of Justice, the Custom House, and,

* Annual Register for 1775, pp. 8, 9.

so far as it could be done by power, the trade of that port, were removed thither; so that they were already in possession of a principal share of those spoils, which, it was supposed, would have effectually influenced the conduct of that people, and thereby have bred such incurable envy, jealousy, and animosity, between the gainers and sufferers, that the refractory capital, finding herself abandoned, and being left alone to ruminate upon her forlorn situation, would soon be reclaimed, and brought to as full a sense of her duty as of her punishment.

“Whether this opinion was founded upon a thorough knowledge of human nature in general, or took its rise from particular instances, which were extended in speculation to the whole, may, perhaps, in a certain degree, be determined from the following generous sentiments of the inhabitants of Salem. They say, ‘We are deeply afflicted,’ &c.*

“The whole Address is remarkable for the propriety with which it is conducted, and the justness of its sentiments. They treat the Governor with the highest respect, and hope much from his general character, as well as from his conduct in a former government; they express the strongest attachment to the mother country, the deepest concern for the present unhappy troubles, and the most fervent wishes for a speedy and happy reconciliation, to obtain which they are willing to sacrifice everything compatible with the safety and dignity of British subjects.” †

* Here are recited the second paragraph of the Address, and the first sentence of the third, as printed below.

† In Almon’s “Remembrancer,” Vol. II. p. 22, the Address is published with these remarks: — . . . “Though this was prior to the commencement of our publication, yet, as it hath been highly commended for the sound sense it contains, the dignity of the sentiments, the noble, manly, and sober spirit of the expressions, an obliging correspondent has desired it may be preserved in this work. . . . Our readers will thank us for exhibiting it as a piece of generous disinterestedness also, and an honorable contrast to the conduct of some towns in this kingdom, and in Ireland, who endeavored, with an unfeeling and savage avarice, to enrich themselves with the wreck of the New England fishery.” See also Ramsay’s “American Revolution,” Vol. I. 124.

The following is the Address.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

“We, who are merchants and freeholders in the town of Salem, beg leave to present to you our dutiful respects on your appointment to the government of this Province. The universal tribute of thanks and applause paid you for the wisdom, mildness, and exact regularity of your conduct in another command, cannot fail to excite the most just expectations that this Province will enjoy the happy fruits of your benignity.

“We are deeply affected with a sense of our public calamities; but the miseries that are now rapidly hastening on our brethren in the capital of the Province greatly excite our commiseration; and we hope your Excellency will use your endeavors to prevent a further accumulation of evils on that already sorely distressed people.

“By shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither, and to our benefit; but Nature, in the formation of our harbor, forbids our becoming rivals in commerce to that convenient mart: and, were it otherwise, we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all the feelings of humanity, could we indulge one thought to seize on wealth and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbors. But, so far from receiving a benefit, we are greatly injured by the shutting up the harbor of Boston, as it deprives us of a market for much the largest part of our West India imports; and there is not a town in the Province but will feel the ill effects of it. Permit us, then, Sir, to apply to your clemency and justice to afford us every alleviation in your power, and to procure for us every possible relief from this extensive mischief.

“We account it the greatest unhappiness that this Province, which has ever been foremost in loyalty to the Kings of Britain, — in its efforts to defend their territories and enlarge their dominions, — should be the first to feel our Sovereign’s severest displeasure. Our fathers fled from

oppression, braved every danger, and here began a settlement on bare creation. Almost incredible are the fatigues and difficulties they encountered to subdue a dreary wilderness, filled with savage beasts, and yet more savage men; but, by their invincible resolution, they rose superior to them all, and, by their astonishing efforts, greatly facilitated the settlement of the other British Colonies in America. Yes, Sir, we speak it with grief, — the sons are checked and dishonored for exhibiting proofs of their inheriting some portion of that spirit which, in their fathers, produced such astonishing effects.

“A happy union with Great Britain is the wish of all the Colonies. It is their unspeakable grief that it has, in any degree, been interrupted. We earnestly desire to repair the breach. We ardently pray that harmony may be restored. And, for these ends, every measure compatible with the dignity and safety of British subjects we shall gladly adopt.

“We assure your Excellency we shall make it our constant endeavor to preserve the peace and promote the welfare of the Province; and hereby we shall best advance the interest of our Sovereign.

“In these times, the administration of government must be peculiarly arduous and difficult; but yours we wish may be as easy as the nature of things will possibly admit, and the event happy; and that your public labors may be crowned with the noblest reward, — the voluntary, disinterested applause of a whole free people.” *

* The Governor made the following answer.

“GENTLEMEN :

“I thank you for the obliging expressions towards me contained in your Address, and be assured it will always afford me sincere pleasure to be of use to the inhabitants of this town, or any individuals in the Province.

“I feel, as well as you, the inconveniences that the inhabitants must suffer from shutting up the port of Boston, and should be glad if they would co-operate with my endeavors to extricate themselves from them; but, without their assistance, I can take no step towards their relief. I am sorry that the people of that capital should have given such repeated provocations to the

Mr. Pickering also draughted an address to the Governor, from the Court of Common Pleas and the Court of Sessions.

Subsequently, in a printed letter to Governor Sullivan, dated April 22d, 1808, (page 23d,) Mr. Pickering says, —

“Another incident it may not be improper to mention. While the seat of government remained at Salem, I received a note from the Secretary of the Province, informing me that the Governor wished to see me at the Secretary’s house. I went, and was introduced to Governor Gage. Taking me into another room, he entered into conversation on the then state of things — the solemn league and covenant, and the non-importation agreements. In the conclusion, the General said, ‘Well, there are merchants who, notwithstanding all your agreements, will import British goods.’ I answered, ‘They may import them, but the people will use their liberty to buy or to let them alone.’”

On the 20th of August, 1774, the following notice was given to the inhabitants of Salem: —

“The Committee of Correspondence desire the merchants, freeholders, and other inhabitants of this town, to meet at the town-house chamber next Wednesday, at nine o’clock in the morning, to appoint five or more deputies, to meet at Ipswich, on the 6th of September next, with the deputies which shall be appointed by the other towns in this county, to consider of, and determine on, such measures as the late

King and the British nation, as to force them to take the present measures in support of their authority. Great Britain is equally desirous as yourselves of a happy union with this, as well as every other, Colony, and, inheriting the spirit of her ancestors, finds it necessary to support her rights, as the supreme head of her extended empire. She strives not to check that spirit which you say you inherit from your fathers, but to inculcate that due obedience to the King, in his Parliament, which your fathers acknowledged.

“SALEM, June 18th, 1774.”

acts of Parliament and our other grievances render necessary and expedient.

“SALEM, August 19th, 1774.”

Some of the proceedings consequent upon this notification are detailed in the following letter from Mr. Pickering to his brother-in-law,* Paine Wingate : —

“SALEM, August the 25th, 1774.

“DEAR SIR :

“It will be agreeable to you to have an authentic account of the recent transactions in this town.

“Last Saturday notifications were posted up in many places of the town, by order of the Committee of Correspondence, desiring the inhabitants to assemble at the town-house yesterday morning at nine o'clock. . . . At eight o'clock, I received a letter from the Secretary, informing me that it was his Excellency the Governor's† desire, that I and the rest of the Committee of Correspondence would meet him at Colonel Browne's,‡ for he had something of importance to communicate to us. We waited on him there at nine o'clock, as requested. He first asked us if we avowed the printed notifications for the meeting of the inhabitants at that time. Captain [Richard] Derby, Jr., answered in the affirmative. Says the Governor, ‘As you assembled the people, 'tis your duty to disperse them; you are the source, and must abide the consequences.’ Captain Derby replied, ‘Now the people are assembled, they will act as they think best. We cannot oblige them to disperse.’ The Governor declared it was an unlawful meeting, for the seditious purpose of opposing an act of Parliament. Captain Derby answered, ‘Neither we nor the people thought we were opposing even an act of Parliament, much

* At the date of the letter, the minister at Hampton Falls, and subsequently a member of the Senate of the United States from New Hampshire. He was married to a sister of Mr. Pickering.

† General Gage.

‡ A Mandamus Councillor, who lived at Salem.

less the laws of the Province.' Says the Governor, 'I am not going to enter into a conversation about the matter, or to determine *quirks* of law; the Attorney-General and Colonel Browne (they were present, as well as the Secretary) will inform (or answer) you there. I came here to execute the laws, (or acts of Parliament, I forget which,) and I am determined to do it.' Some other things passed, but not material, and the Governor concluded thus: 'I desire you to disperse the meeting of the inhabitants; if they disregard you, the Sheriff will go first; and if they do not then disperse, and he needs support, I will support him, and the people must abide the consequences.' The Governor appeared almost the whole time in an indecent passion, and uttered the closing sentence with much vehemence. I was told by Dr. Holten,* yesterday, that the Governor had no rest from the time our notification appeared, scarcely sitting half an hour in a day. The Attorney-General and the High Sheriff were specially summoned for the purpose, and orders were given to the regiment to be in order, who, accordingly, equipped themselves as if for battle, and marched from their encampment near our fort to the Neck gate, where the main body (there are but about three hundred men, and about as many women and children) halted and loaded; then about eighty marched up street, almost to brother Williams's. But before this movement of the soldiers was known, and whilst we were in at Colonel Browne's, the inhabitants, being assembled at the town-house, transacted all the business of the meeting, which was merely to choose delegates † for a county meeting to be held at Ipswich, on the 6th of September next, and were actually broke up before we got to the town-house. To-day Colonel Frye, by express orders from the Governor, issued a warrant for apprehending the members of the Committee of Correspondence, who ordered the notifications to

* Of Danvers; in 1778 a member of Congress.

† Richard Derby, John Pickering, Jr., Jonathan Ropes, Timothy Pickering, Jr., Jonathan Gardner, Jr., and Richard Manning were elected.

be posted. These were Captain Richard Manning, brother Williams, Mr. Jonathan Ropes, Jonathan Gardner, Jr., Mr. Sprague, and myself. Mr. Warwick Palfray was also included, though not then present. Captain Derby was omitted, being absent through indisposition; but he had expressly desired his brother Gardner to inform the Committee that he was for having a town-meeting. The High Sheriff first came and arrested me. I went with him to Frye's. Mr. Sprague came up, and the Sheriff arrested him also. Frye told us all that was required was this, — that we should each recognize in £100, without sureties, to appear at the next Superior Court, to be held at Salem the first Tuesday in November, to answer to the charge against us in the warrant; which was, for unlawfully and seditiously assembling the people without leave from the Governor, contrary to the laws *and the statute in that case lately made and provided*. Mr. Sprague asked me what was best to be done. I told him I thought we had better recognize, which we did. My motives were these: I could conceive no prejudice would arise to the cause in complying so far. The warrant was issued and executed by lawful officers. We need be under no apprehensions of being convicted of any crime, because the juries will be appointed as heretofore; (for I think it clear that no jury can be appointed agreeably to the act, in this county, till next March term, and perhaps not till next March twelve months;) or if a jury should be packed, (which is scarce possible,) and we convicted, we should then have ample reason for a refusal of submission. If we opposed now, and the Governor should persist in his attempts to execute the laws, a tumult and carnage must ensue; for the people are exasperated to a high degree. These were the reasons I gave the rest of the Committee; and, although they at first thought it would have been best to have refused to enter into recognizance, yet they appeared entirely to acquiesce, (for the reasons I gave,) and I supposed that, when arrested, they would recognize without hesitation. But they have since refused

before the Justice, Frye, who immediately, I am told, posted off to the Governor to inform him of it. They told Frye, however, that they should be ready again to appear before him, if summoned. The Governor, I doubt not, will pursue the matter; but I am inclined to think they will comply, for the reasons above mentioned, which I shall urge this evening at our meeting."

Colonel Frye became alarmed by the excitement caused by the arrests made under his warrant, and, in the "Essex Gazette" of September 13th, and "Salem Gazette" of September 16th, appeared the following paragraph, signed by him, but draughted by Mr. Pickering: —

"In consequence of an express order from Governor Gage, I issued a warrant, grounding it upon the late act of Parliament for altering the Constitution of this Province, against seven gentlemen, members of the Committee of Correspondence in Salem, for causing the inhabitants of the town to assemble for the purpose of choosing delegates for the late county meeting held at Ipswich; in consequence whereof, two of them were arrested, and gave bond to appear at the next Superior Court to be held at Salem, to answer for their so doing. These two bonds I have this day freely, of my own accord, delivered up to the persons who gave them, and have recalled the warrant. Further, I declare that I will not accept of any commission under said act of Parliament, nor do anything, either in my public or private capacity, to carry it into execution. And therefore hope to be restored to that friendship and regard with my fellow-citizens and countrymen which I heretofore enjoyed.

"P. FRYE.

"SALEM, September 8th, 1774."

On a scrap of paper, in the same handwriting as the recognizance, (presumed to be that of Frye,) is a

memorandum, — “T. Pickering said if the acts were put in force, we should wade in blood first, or to that effect.”

After the decease of John Higginson, the Register of Deeds for the county of Essex, Mr. Pickering sent a printed circular, dated September 27th, 1774, to the freeholders of the several towns in the county, proposing himself as a candidate for the office. Among other things, he says, —

“I am happy in the friendship of many gentlemen in sundry towns in the county, who have heretofore made me acquainted with their own sentiments, and assured me I might expect the united suffrages of their townsmen. In such cases, their kind information and assistance may supersede the *necessity* of this application, but perhaps not render it *improper*. I suppose it is known to some freeholders in each town in the county, that I have a long time assisted Mr. Higginson in his office; and, of course, it may seem probable that I am sufficiently acquainted with the business of it; but this is a point in which you ought to be satisfied by other evidence than my own. If, Gentlemen, you obtain this satisfaction, you will confer on me a great and lasting obligation by giving me your votes. . . . To determine your votes, Gentlemen, you will think yourselves bound to be furnished with something better than the promises of a stranger, — and as such I must consider myself to most of the freeholders in many towns in the county. In these cases, I ground my request entirely on the testimonies of gentlemen acquainted with my character, and whose probity, honor, and judgment are well known. Their declarations concerning my qualifications and past behavior will, at this time, best determine the freeholders respecting the propriety or impropriety of giving me their suffrages; as, if I shall be so happy as to obtain them, my future conduct must show whether I really deserved them, and whether I shall merit a repetition of the favor.”

The following letter to the freeholders of Essex, draughted, apparently, by Richard Derby, Jr., accompanied Mr. Pickering's circular. It was signed by four of the Selectmen, and by six members of the Committee of Correspondence, of Salem.

“SALEM, September 27th, 1774.

“GENTLEMEN,

“As, by the death of Colonel Higginson, a vacancy has taken place in the office of Register of Deeds for this county, and warrants have been issued for the election of a successor, we think it will be agreeable to you to be informed, that Captain Timothy Pickering, Jr., (who has a freehold in the county, as the law requires,) will undoubtedly have the votes of the freeholders of this town; and we can, with pleasure and sincerity, recommend him as a person in every respect well qualified to discharge that important trust, more especially as he has, for some years past, been thoroughly conversant with the business of that office. This town, well convinced of his ability and assiduity, have elected him into the most important town offices; and, immediately on Colonel Higginson's resigning the office of Town Clerk, he was elected to supply his place, and has discharged that and his other offices entirely to the satisfaction of the town. And, should you now give him your suffrages for Register of Deeds, we have no doubt you also will soon be convinced that your favor was properly bestowed, and that, by intrusting him with that important office, you will in the best manner have provided for the safety of those writings on which the titles to your freeholds are founded.

“Hoping you will concur with us in sentiment, we are, Gentlemen, your friends,” &c.

In October, Mr. Pickering was elected Register of Deeds, probably without opposition, as, on a reelection in 1776, “all the votes were for him.” He resigned

the office about the end of May, 1777, in consequence of his acceptance of the office of Adjutant-General of the army of the United States.

At a meeting, on the 13th of February, 1775, of the officers of the several companies in the First Regiment of militia in the county of Essex, Mr. Pickering was elected Colonel. He was commissioned accordingly, under the royal government, and again, on the 14th of February, 1776, by "the major part of the Council of the Massachusetts Bay." * He held this office until some time after he had joined the army of the United States, in 1777.

On the 26th of February, 1775, Colonel Alexander Leslie, with a portion of the Sixty-fourth Regiment of infantry, was despatched by General Gage from Castle William, in Boston harbor, for the purpose of destroying some cannon at that time in the North Fields in Salem. By internal evidence, and the circumstances of the case, I am led to think that Colonel Pickering was the author of the following contemporary account of the expedition in the "*Essex Gazette*" of Tuesday, February 28th, 1775.†

"Last Sabbath the peace of the town was disturbed by the coming of a regiment of the King's troops, the particulars relative to which are as follows: A transport arrived at Marblehead, apparently manned as usual. Between two and three o'clock, (as soon as the people had gone to meet-

* It was enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts, that, after the 19th of September, 1775, all appointments and commissions "before the present meeting of this General Court, made or granted by any Governor or Lieutenant-Governor," &c., should be null and void. — *Ancient Charters, &c., of Massachusetts*, p. 690.

† My conjecture derives support from the statement of Mr. Charles M. Endicott, that it is "believed to have been written" by Colonel Pickering. — See "*Proceedings of the Essex Institute*," Vol. I. p. 122.

ing,) the decks were covered with soldiers, who, having loaded, and fixed their bayonets, landed with great despatch, and instantly marched off. Some of the inhabitants, suspecting they were bound for Salem to seize some materials there preparing for an artillery, despatched several messengers to inform us of it. These materials were on the north side of the North River, and to come at them it was necessary to cross a bridge, one part of which was made to draw up for the convenience of letting vessels pass through. The inhabitants kept a lookout for the appearance of the troops. The vanguard arrived, and took their route down in town as far as the Long Wharf, perhaps to decoy the inhabitants thither away from the place to which the main body were destined. The main body arrived soon after, and halted a few minutes by the town-house. It is said inquiry was immediately made by some of the officers for a half-brother [John Sargent] of Colonel Browne, the Mandamus Councillor. Be this as it may, he was very soon whispering in the Colonel's ear, in the front of the regiment; and when he parted from the Colonel, the regiment marched off with a quick pace in a direct course for the North Bridge; just before their entrance upon which the draw-bridge was pulled up. The regiment, however, pushed forward till they came to the draw-bridge, not observing (as it seemed) that it was drawn up. The Colonel, who led them, expressed some surprise, and then, turning about, ordered an officer to face his company to a body of men standing on a wharf on the other side the draw-bridge, and fire. One of our townsmen* (who had kept alongside the Colonel from the time he marched from the town-house) instantly told him he had better not fire; that he had no right to fire without further orders. 'And if you do fire,' said he, 'you will be all dead men.' The company neither fired nor faced.

"The Colonel then retired to the centre of his regiment,

* Captain John Felt.

assembled his officers, and held a consultation ; which being ended, the Colonel advanced a little, and declared he would maintain his ground, and go over the bridge before he returned, if it was a month first. The same townsman replied, he might stay there as long as he pleased ; nobody cared for that. The half-brother before mentioned (it is said) made towards the bridge, but, seeing the draw-bridge up, says, ‘It is all over with us.’ He has since disappeared. Meanwhile, two large gondolas, that lay aground (for it was low water), were scuttled, lest they should cross the channel in them. But, whilst one gentleman,* with his assistants, was scuttling his own gondola, a party of about twenty soldiers jumped into it, and, with their bayonets charged against our unarmed townsmen (some of whom they pricked), compelled them to quit it ; but, before this, a sufficient hole had been made in the bottom. This attack of the soldiers, and some other occurrences, occasioned a little bickering ; but, by the interposition of some of the inhabitants, the dispute subsided.

“ At length, some gentlemen asked the Colonel what was his design in making this movement, and why he would cross the bridge. He said he had orders to cross it, and he would cross it if he lost his life, with the lives of all his men ; and now (or before) asked why the King’s highway was obstructed. He was told it was not the King’s road, but the property of the inhabitants, who had a right to do what they pleased with it. Finally, the Colonel said he must go over ; and if the draw-bridge were let down, so that he might pass, he pledged his honor he would march not above thirty rods beyond it, and then immediately return. The regiment had now been on the bridge about an hour and a half ; and, everything being secured, the inhabitants directed the draw-bridge to be let down. The regiment immediately passed over, marched a few rods, returned, and, with great expedition, went back again to

* Major Joseph Sprague.

Marblehead, where they embarked on board the transport without delay.

“The regiment brought with them lanterns, hatchets, pickaxes, spades, handspikes, and several coils of rope.

“When all the circumstances are considered, there can remain no doubt that the sole purpose of this manœuvre was to steal away the artillery materials before mentioned. In the first place, the regiment was taken from the Castle, so that the inhabitants of Boston might be prevented giving us any intelligence. The transport arrived at Marblehead a considerable time before the regiment was landed; but the men were kept snug under hatches. As soon as the inhabitants of Marblehead had got to meeting, the troops landed, and pushed on their march to Salem, and proceeded to the very spot where the materials for the artillery were lodged. But, meeting with this sad rebuff, and finding their plot was discovered, they then made a retreat. ’Tis regretted that an officer of Colonel Leslie’s acknowledged worth should be obliged, in obedience to orders, to come on so pitiful an errand.

“Various reports were spread abroad respecting the troops. The country was alarmed; and one company arrived in arms from Danvers just as the troops left the town. We immediately despatched messengers to the neighboring towns, to save them the trouble of coming in; but the alarm flew like lightning (and fame doubtless magnified the first simple reports), so that great numbers were in arms, and some on the march, before our messengers arrived.”

If the above narrative has been rightly attributed to Colonel Pickering, it may be presumed that he wrote likewise the following vindication of it, printed in the succeeding “Essex Gazette” of March 7th:—

“The account published last week in this paper, . . . of the march of the Sixty-fourth Regiment (in Draper’s *true*

account 'tis called a *detachment* of the Sixty-fourth Regiment ; but we are informed only fifteen or twenty of the men remained at the Castle *), is, in Mills and Hicks's paper, said to contain several falsehoods. † In answer to this charge, we say, that we endeavored to collect a true state of the facts by inquiring of those who were eye and ear witnesses. In the hurry and alarm, there might be a misapprehension in some things ; but there was no intention to detract from Colonel Leslie's courage, honor, or prudence, or deviate from the straight path of truth ; but, to establish the latter, we are constrained to make a few remarks on Draper's account, and on that published by Mills and Hicks. The latter declare, 'they are authorized to say, that the Colonel never ordered any part of the troops to fire, but that he was not prevented from giving any orders he should have thought necessary by the threat of the townsman,' — as they say was insinuated in our account. The townsman, and others of the inhabitants, men of undoubted veracity, still say they are absolutely certain that the Colonel talked about firing on the people ; and the townsman (who stood within two yards of him) declares that the Colonel, turning to an officer near him, expressed himself in this manner : 'You must face about this division (or company), and fire upon those people.' This, and this only, occasioned the townsman to make a reply (with a loud voice, for his resentment was kindled by the order to fire) in these words, as exactly as he can now recollect : 'Fire ! You had better be damned than fire ! You can have no right to fire without further orders.' We added, in our account, 'The company neither fired nor faced.' Whether it were prudence, or want of

* Dr. Holmes says the number of the soldiers with Leslie was one hundred and forty. — Holmes's *American Annals*, Vol. II. p. 203, 2d edit. Mr. Endicott states that "General Gage ordered the 64th regiment, consisting of some three hundred men," to embark, &c. — *Proceedings of the Essex Institute*, Vol. II. p. 105.

† Draper published "The Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Weekly News-Letter," and Mills and Hicks, "The Massachusetts Gazette and the Boston Post Boy and Advertiser ;" both of them Tory newspapers.

orders or disposition, or any other motive, that prevented an act so manifestly unjustifiable as this would have been, we could not tell. We related a simple fact, — that ‘the company neither fired nor faced.’

“Mills and Hicks go on: ‘Nor is there the least truth in what is asserted of the Colonel’s having pledged his honor, as he absolutely insisted on going over the bridge.’ No other answer to this will be required, than the declaration of the clergyman * referred to in Draper’s account. These are his words: ‘Concerned for the welfare of my townsmen, I addressed Colonel Leslie, and desired the soldiers under his command might be restrained from pushing their bayonets. He told me they were much insulted, and intimated to me his determination to pass over the bridge, but concluded with saying, if the inhabitants would lower the bridge, he would give his word (and, I am pretty certain, his honor) that he would not march above fifty rods.’ For the sake of those who are strangers to the clergyman, we add, that he is a gentleman of unimpeached veracity, virtue, and honor, and universally respected by the inhabitants for his manly, prudent, and judicious conduct on the occasion.

“The declaration, that ‘no half-brother of a Mandamus Councillor, or any other person, in Salem, whispered or spoke to Colonel Leslie while he was in the town of Salem,’ is very extraordinary. Even Draper admits that the clergyman conversed with him. But we know that at least *two* other persons spoke to him, though in a strain somewhat different from that attributed to the half-brother. ’Tis a fact, that the half-brother was in the front of the regiment, whispering or talking with an officer, who, the inhabitants naturally concluded, was the commanding officer of the regiment; for at that time Colonel Leslie was *known* to very few. This half-brother afterwards walking with one of the inhabitants (while the soldiers were on the bridge), they had some conversation to this effect: ‘’Tis all over

* The Rev. Thomas Barnard, Jr.

with them,' said the half-brother. 'What is over?' said his companion. He replied, 'The bridge is drawn up.' 'What then?' rejoined the other. The half-brother then whispered, 'They were going after the cannon.' It must be granted that these circumstances (especially when connected with others known to the inhabitants) might very justly raise their suspicions that he was the informer. If he is not in any measure guilty, we wish his innocence may appear. . . .

"'Tis said, also, that the people, *discovering* Colonel Leslie's intention to ferry a few men over in a gondola as soon as it could be got afloat, jumped into her, and with axes cut through her bottom; that Colonel Leslie, seeing this, ordered a party to drive them out of her. Some of the people, however, having obstinately refused to quit her, the soldiers were obliged to use force.' Strange language this, — a gentleman *obstinately* refused to quit *his own* gondola! And, notwithstanding the hurry and bustle, the other gondola was not scuttled till leave was expressly given by the owner. Yet, for doing it, the blood of the inhabitants must be drawn. We did not know till now who gave this violent order, and are sorry to find it was Colonel Leslie. The people *suspected*, not *discovered*, his intention to ferry over his men in the gondolas; and could not conceive that the soldiers had any other right to interrupt their work in cutting the bottoms, than the right of arms; which frequently regards neither law nor property, when standing in the way of their designs who wield them.

"The minds of the people are not likely to be soothed by such actions as we have been speaking of. We have been cautioned to avoid hypocrisy. Without hypocrisy, it may be said, that the serious are justly offended that an uproar and disturbance were occasioned on a day of public worship, and even whilst one congregation was assembled. But this Sabbath-day expedition well agrees with proclamations* for the encouragement of piety and virtue."

* This must refer to General Gage's proclamation of July 21st, 1774, in the "Salem Gazette" (a different paper from the "Essex Gazette") of July 29th.

The writer omits the names of persons implicated in the resistance to the King's troops, which seems to have been done by design, to avoid rendering any individual a conspicuous mark for the resentment of the British government.

Dr. Holmes quotes President Stiles's manuscripts to the effect, that Leslie pledged his honor, that, if the draw-bridge were let down, he would march but *thirteen* rods over it, and return; and that Colonel Pickering, with his forty brave men, faced the King's troops.* Mr. Endicott produces respectable evidence to prove that there were no armed men on the north side of the bridge, and that Colonel Pickering was on the south side.† A few years before his death, Colonel Pickering, in referring to the passage in Holmes, observed that "*thirteen* rods" should have been "*thirty* rods." I do not recollect that he pointed out any other error, and my impression has been that he was on the north side of the bridge, with a number of men armed with muskets. The men in Danvers and Marblehead were assembling in arms, and, from the irritation previously existing, it might reasonably be expected, that, in the town of Salem, containing five thousand inhabitants, as many as thirty or forty men would repair with their arms to the bridge. In the two articles above quoted, and ascribed to Colonel Pickering, the presence of armed citizens is not mentioned. Dr. Charles Pickering, his grandson, relates a conversation with a very intelligent old lady, the late Mrs. Thomas Sanders, in which she said, Mr. Barnard, in interceding with Colonel Leslie not to fire, told him that the people were, as he saw them, unarmed, but they knew where they could pro-

* Holmes's "American Annals," Vol. II. p. 203, 2d edit.

† "Proceedings of the Essex Institute," Vol. I. pp. 111, 128, 130.

cure fire-arms in a few moments, and every individual knew how to use them. The "unarmed" people, Dr. Pickering says, may have been those on the south side of the draw; but Mrs. Sanders left on him the impression, that the only fire-arms on the ground were in the hands of the British troops.

I do not deem it important to the reputation of Colonel Pickering, or of Salem, to maintain that, in a moment of so sudden and great excitement, he organized a military opposition to Colonel Leslie. It is sufficient, that he and many of his townsmen went to the bridge with promptness, and acted with the resolution and prudence demanded by the circumstances, in making the first resistance in the American Revolution, after the arrival of General Gage, to a body of British troops.*

* See a detailed account of occurrences connected with this expedition of Colonel Leslie, in Mr. Endicott's article in the "Proceedings of the Essex Institute," Vol. I. p. 102.

CHAPTER V.

Battle of Lexington. — Colonel Pickering and the Salem Militia unjustly censured in Regard to it. — Salem Memorial and Resolve of the Legislature in their Vindication. — Colonel Pickering marches a Regiment of Militia to New York and New Jersey. — His Views on Public Affairs. — General Gage. — Josiah Quincy, Jr. — England distressed by American Non-importation.

A FEW weeks after Leslie's excursion to Salem, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, with a larger body of troops, was sent from Boston, in another direction, for the purpose of destroying military stores collected in the town of Concord. They left Boston on the 18th of April, 1775, at night, and, on arriving early the next morning at Lexington, came upon a body of militia, on whom they fired, killing eight men and wounding others; after which they proceeded to Concord.

Colonel Pickering's relation to the battle of Lexington was afterwards made the subject of misrepresentation by his political adversaries, when, for party purposes, his character was to be held up to reproach.

On the 19th of April he was in his office (the Registry of Deeds), in Salem, when Captain Epes, of Danvers, came in, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, and informed him that a man had ridden into Danvers and reported, that the British troops had marched from Boston to Lexington and had attacked the militia. Epes was the commander of a company belonging to Colonel Pickering's regiment, and he asked for orders. Danvers being nearer than Salem to the scene of action, Colonel Pickering gave him a verbal

answer, that the Danvers companies should march without waiting for those of Salem.

Colonel Pickering went immediately to the centre of the town, and soon the Selectmen and other leading gentlemen assembled there, at Webb's tavern, in School Street, since called Court Street. He was himself chairman of the Selectmen, and a member of the Committee of Safety. A short consultation ensued. Those who knew the distance of Lexington from Salem, and its situation relative to Boston* (of which Colonel Pickering "had no personal knowledge, and but an indistinct idea"†), observed, that there was no probability of the militia of Salem being able to fall in with the British troops before they would have returned to Boston, and that the marching of the Salem companies would, therefore, be useless. Nevertheless, it was deemed expedient that they should assemble and begin their march, and for this sole reason,—that it would be evidence to their fellow-citizens, that the inhabitants of Salem were of one mind with them, and disposed to coöperate in every measure which the common safety required. The four companies of Salem marched accordingly, muster-

* At that period the road from Salem to Charlestown and Boston, and to Lexington, lay through Medford. Salem lies north-easterly and Lexington north-westerly from Boston. The consecutive distances from Salem, as given in the almanacs of that time, are, —to Danvers, two miles; Newell's, in Lynn, seven; Malden, six; Medford, three; Boston, four; in all, twenty-two miles. But, in tracing the road on Borden's Map of Massachusetts, I estimate the distance from Salem to Medford to be about fifteen and a quarter miles, thence to Winter Hill about one and a quarter, and thence to Bunker Hill about two and a quarter. By the same map I make Lexington about seven miles from Medford, about twenty-two from Salem, about eleven from Boston, and about nine and a half from Charlestown Neck. Cambridge lies westerly of Charlestown, and the roads from Cambridge and Medford converged, uniting at Charlestown Neck.

† Colonel Pickering's printed letter of April 22d, 1808, to Governor Sullivan, p. 24.

ing, on the occasion, nearly three hundred men ; but, so strong was the impression, that to proceed under an idea of falling in with the British troops would be fruitless, that the companies were halted perhaps twenty minutes soon after passing the Bell tavern, in Danvers, expecting every moment information that the British troops had returned to Boston. But, after a short consultation among the officers and some prominent citizens in the ranks, it was determined to push forward until they should receive definite intelligence. At Newell's tavern, in Lynn, the men halted just long enough to refresh themselves with drink. They then proceeded, without stopping, until they reached Medford, where they gained the first certain information that the British troops were on their return, and this by a route which showed their intention to get to Boston by the way of Charlestown. Colonel Pickering then hastened the march of his men on the great road from Medford to Charlestown, in expectation of falling in with them. When he had reached the top of Winter Hill, he saw them marching in order on the road from Cambridge to Charlestown, and also saw the smoke of musketry discharged at them by some scattered militia from so great a distance as to be of no avail. The British troops whom he saw did not return a single shot ; the militia appeared to be entirely out of their reach. On the first sight of the British troops, he halted his companies, and ordered them to prime and load, in full expectation of coming to an engagement. While they were in the act, or at the moment of its completion, a person arrived with a message from General Heath, the superior officer on the field, that the British troops had artillery in their rear, and could not be approached by musketry alone, and that the General desired to see Colonel

Pickering. Leaving the companies in that position, he went across the fields with the messenger, and met General Heath somewhere on the ground between the Cambridge and Medford roads to Charlestown.*

During the short time that he was with General Heath, he saw the British troops ascending Bunker Hill — the hill on the left of the road to Charlestown, after passing the low neck between Mystic and Charles rivers. It was then about sunset. As soon as the British troops gained Bunker Hill, they formed in a line opposite to the Neck, and General Heath judged that any attempt upon them in that position would be idle. The next day they entered Boston. Colonel Pickering returned to the Salem militia, and led them back to Medford, where they remained that night, mounting a guard at the bridge. The next day they returned to Salem.

The British troops who first marched to Lexington, and thence to Concord, were eight hundred grenadiers and light infantry, the flower of the royal army; and on their return they were reënforced at Lexington by a detachment of nine hundred men, with two field-pieces, under Lord Percy. Of these numbers, two hundred and seventy-three were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, leaving a regular force of fourteen hundred effective men.†

The party calumny against Colonel Pickering was, that

* Colonel Pickering says that Heath, in 1807, did not remember this interview, and had even forgotten his person. — *Letter to Sullivan* (April 22d, 1808, p. 25.) — In his "Memoirs," however, Heath says that when it "had become so dusk as to render the flashes of the muskets very visible, . . . an officer on horseback came up from the Medford road, and inquired the circumstances of the enemy." Colonel Pickering must have been this officer, though on the march from Salem to Winter Hill he was on foot.

† Ramsay's "History of the American Revolution," Vol. II. pp. 187, 189.

he had a fine regiment of seven hundred men, but that he was dilatory in his march, owing to timidity, or to partiality to the British; otherwise he might have intercepted the British troops before they ascended Bunker Hill, and, "worn down as they were by fatigue, and exhausted of ammunition,"* he might probably have destroyed them or compelled them to surrender.

Now, the Memorial of the town of Salem (extracts from which are given below) proves conclusively, that he had with him fewer than three hundred men, and that there was no censurable delay on the march. If the British were worn down with fatigue, how much better was the condition of his men? They were not accustomed to long marches; and their muskets and cartridge-boxes, carried so many hours in a hot day, must have become exceedingly burdensome, whereas the British regulars were habituated to similar exertions. Their march was nearly as long as that of the detachment under Lord Percy. They had had no food from the beginning of their march. Even if Colonel Pickering might by possibility have intercepted the British troops, and if he might have conjectured that they were much fatigued, he certainly could not know that *their ammunition was exhausted*. Neither is this phrase to receive a strictly literal interpretation. Dr. Gordon and General Heath say they had only "a round or two;" but this small quantity, in the hands of some twelve hundred regulars, together with the two field-pieces, would, I apprehend, give them the superiority over three hundred militia, for the short time the conflict could have lasted.

I subjoin, as a complete vindication as well of Colo-

* Bancroft's "History of the United States," Vol. VII. p. 309.

nel Pickering as of the officers and men under his command, portions of the above-mentioned Memorial of the town of Salem, dated the 10th of August, 1775, when the facts were fresh in the memory of the inhabitants.* This document appears to have escaped the recollection of Colonel Pickering when adverting to this subject in his letter of April 22d, 1808, to Governor Sullivan;† neither has it been referred to by those who have censured his conduct.

“TO THE HONORABLE THE GENERAL COURT
OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY.

“The town of Salem humbly sheweth, that, many calumnies and misrepresentations having been made and industriously propagated concerning the conduct of the town upon and since the 19th of April last, in consequence of which its character has been greatly injured and some of its inhabitants insulted and abused, the town thinks it a point of duty to take effectual steps to vindicate its innocence, and procure a redress of those grievances, which are too many and too heavy any longer silently to be endured, and therefore beg leave to give the following detail of facts : —

“On the 19th of April, very soon after authentic intelligence arrived of the barbarous deeds of the King’s troops at Lexington, the inhabitants mustered in arms, and near three hundred marched off, and directed their course according to the intelligence they were continually receiving on the road of the situation of the troops ; but, though they marched with as much despatch as was possible, consistent with their being fit for action after so long a march as they must necessarily make, yet they arrived in sight of the troops not till the last of them were marching up Bunker’s Hill. Why the inhabitants of Salem should be so highly censured for their conduct on this occasion, the town cannot conceive. Thousands of men, nearer, much nearer, the scene of action, either stayed

* In Force’s “ American Archives,” 4th series, Vol. III. col. 337.

† See *ante*, p. 70.

at home or arrived no sooner than the Salem militia. From Milton and its environs, in particular, the militia got as far as Cambridge only, at the same time that the Salem militia arrived at Charlestown; yet, by a strange and unaccountable partiality, the inhabitants of Salem only are reproached; and the multitudes near at hand, who never stirred an inch, or, though they lived but at half the distance, arrived as late as the Salem militia, are entirely excused. In short, it is most absurdly declared by many, that, if the Salem militia had not been negligent and pusillanimous, the King's troops must have been entirely cut off; that is, fewer than three hundred men could have done infinitely more in one or two hours, than the whole body of militia assembled had been able to perform that day."

The Memorial then specifies, with the circumstances, the instances in which two British ships of war, stationed off the port of Salem, had been permitted to purchase small quantities of fresh beef and veal for the use of the officers,—"about which some people have made such a clamor, as though the King's troops had from Salem a constant supply of fresh meat,"—and a few articles of food had been taken to Americans in Boston; and it concludes as follows:—

"This, may it please the Honorable Court, is a brief, though faithful, narrative of facts; hence it may be judged how injuriously the town of Salem has been treated. The town cannot forbear to express its astonishment. What could occasion the reproach so liberally thrown upon us? What motives could be imagined sufficient to tempt us to neglect the duty we owe to ourselves, our posterity, and our country? What proofs have we given of our insensibility, that we should neither dread the curses of slavery, nor feel the blessings of liberty? What could we have done more than we have done, to secure the latter to ourselves and all our dearest connections? When the balance

of public affairs was most doubtful, — when neither money nor the means of payment were provided, and the sentiments of the Continent were unknown, — then *Salem* furnished every needful supply in its power, as soon as the army's wants were known; how readily, and to how great amount, the Committee of Supplies and the Treasurer can inform. We have continued these supplies, and the town is drained. What more remains for us to do?

“Such, may it please the Honorable Court, having been our conduct, as the town has been publicly injured and defamed, we may justly pray for a public vindication by the Honorable Court, without which our wrongs will be continued, and probably increased.

“A true copy :

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR., *Town Clerk.*”

“In a legal and full town meeting at Salem, the 10th of August, 1775, the foregoing petition having been repeatedly read and deliberately considered, *Voted* (without one negative voice), That the Town approve of the same, and that the Town Clerk deliver an attested copy thereof to the Representatives of the town, to be presented to the General Court.

“Attested : TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR., *Town Clerk.*”

On this Memorial, the Council, in concurrence with the House of Representatives, passed a *Resolve*, —

“That notwithstanding many ungenerous aspersions have been cast on said town, there is nothing appears to this Court, in the conduct thereof, inimical to the liberties and privileges of America; but, on the contrary, in many instances, its exertions have been such as have done its inhabitants much honor, and been of great advantage to the Colony.”

On the supposition, however, that Colonel Pickering might by possibility have been “alert enough” to encounter the British troops, his steady opposition to the

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oppressive measures of the British government, and his services in the field during the Revolution, prove that the alleged tardiness was owing neither to "timidity," nor (as suggested in Mrs. Warren's History*) "to a predilection in favor of Britain." The tardiness, if any, was caused by his belief that an attempt to intercept the British troops would be unavailing. But it is not improbable, that the censure has been occasioned by his very energy and activity, which brought him so near to the British troops that the community felt a disappointment in his just failing to meet them. Had he marched his men as far only as Malden, it is presumed that he would have escaped all blame.†

In November, 1776, an act was passed by the General Court of Massachusetts, providing that one quarter part of all the able-bodied male persons within the State (with certain exceptions), from sixteen years and upwards, should, either by voluntary enlistment, lot, or draft, be appointed and held in readiness, armed and equipped, to march at a minute's warning, to serve for a term not exceeding three months from the time of their march from home, within and for the defence of any of the United States, when they should be called out to reënforce the Continental army. The respective Brigadier-Generals were to form the men into companies, as nearly as might be, of sixty-eight men, and the companies into battalions, making, as nearly as might be, ten companies to a battalion, and to appoint field officers, according to their rank in the militia, to command them.

* See Appendix, No. I.

† In the Appendix will be found the statements of several individuals, in accordance with the Salem Memorial, in respect to the conduct of Colonel Pickering.

In pursuance of this act, the militia of Salem were assembled in the meeting-house of the First Parish on the 5th of December. The proceedings on the occasion, and the part which Colonel Pickering took in them, are related by him in the following letter to Mr. Jacob Dodge, an intelligent farmer, who once lived near him in Wenham, but had become an inhabitant of New Boston, in New Hampshire, at the date of the letter. Colonel Pickering's object in writing to Mr. Dodge is to vindicate himself against the charge of misconduct in respect to the battle of Lexington.

“WENHAM, April 6th, 1812.

“SIR,

“The account you gave me this morning of the false tales spread abroad in New Hampshire, especially in the remoter towns, where correct information is not easy to be had, induces me to present to you my correspondence with Governor Sullivan, in which I have stated the circumstances respecting my conduct on the day of the battle of Lexington, — not a syllable of which, to my knowledge, has ever been contradicted ; and which, indeed, numbers yet living of my townsmen of Salem know to be true, some of whom are Democrats, and would eagerly have seized on any misstatement, if I had made any.

“In page 26 of my letter to Governor Sullivan, I mention the winter campaign of 1776–77 with the Massachusetts militia. The quota of Salem consisted wholly of volunteers. Upon notice, the militia assembled in the meeting-house in Salem (now Dr. Prince's). I went into the pulpit and addressed them, stating the critical situation of our public affairs, the necessity of reënforcing the army, — the enlistments of the troops then expiring, — and that it was at such a time of difficulty and danger that the real patriot would show his zeal and devotion to his country. I then concluded my speech (which was extempore) in this manner : —

“‘In urging you, fellow-citizens and soldiers, to volunteer your services on this occasion, I have no thought of excusing myself; I will go with you, and partake of all the hardships, as well as the dangers, of a winter campaign.’

“I then left the pulpit, and marched round the aisles of the meeting-house,* and in a few minutes was followed by upwards of sixty † of my townsmen (many of them masters of vessels), rather more than the town's quota. The county of Essex furnished a regiment of a little more than seven hundred men, who marched under my command as Colonel, and performed the campaign in New York and New Jersey.

“The following questions are obvious to be asked :—

“I. If I had shown any signs of cowardice on the day of the battle of Lexington, would my townsmen, who were with me that day, and others who knew all that passed, have turned out as volunteers, the next year, to make a campaign under my command?

“II. If my conduct was blamable on the day of the battle of Lexington, as now, for party purposes, is pretended, would the revolutionary government of Massachusetts have intrusted me with various important offices?

“Now, that government, in the same year, 1775, after the battle of Lexington, appointed me a Justice of the Peace and a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex; and, what was still more important, they appointed me sole Judge of the admiralty or maritime court for the Middle District of Massachusetts, comprehending Boston, Marblehead, Salem, Beverly, Gloucester, and Newburyport; into which were brought many more prizes taken from the British than into the whole State beside. I held these offices until I went to the army under General Washington's immediate command, in June, 1777. In the period of less than two years that I was Judge of the maritime court, about

* Preceded, it is said, by the drum.

† Eighty-six; “among whom were gentlemen of the first character in the place.” — *Boston Gazette* (December 9th, 1776).

a hundred and fifty prizes were brought in, tried, and condemned.

“In my letter to Governor Sullivan, (page 29,) you will see that I was appointed by Congress a member of the Continental Board of War, in conjunction with General Gates and General Mifflin. This was near the close of the campaign of 1777. Now take notice, that the late Governor Samuel Adams, John Adams, late President of the United States, and Elbridge Gerry, now Governor of Massachusetts, were the members of Congress present from Massachusetts at the time I was chosen one of the members of the Board of War.

“Will any man of common sense and common honesty, in any political party called Democratic, require more or better proofs that my conduct on the day of the battle of Lexington was not liable to censure? And what stronger proofs could be offered them in support of my integrity, fidelity, and patriotism?

“Whoever knows, or shall know, these facts, and yet continues to revile me, must be a base and wicked slanderer.

“I am, Sir, your old neighbor and friend,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.”

On the morning of the 20th of April, while Colonel Pickering was at Medford, he received notice that a number of militia officers, assembled at Cambridge, desired to see him; and he went thither. General Joseph Warren was among them. They were consulting on the proper course to be pursued in consequence of the hostilities of the preceding day. A few days afterward, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Paine Wingate, stating, among other things of some interest, the opinion expressed by him at that meeting:—

“SALEM, April 26th, 1775.

“I received your favor by Dr. Orne, and read it with much satisfaction. Your sentiments and mine respecting public

affairs do not differ. I am still of opinion that a pacification upon honorable terms is practicable. This opinion I declared in the council of war at Cambridge last Thursday; urging strenuously a forbearance of hostilities, and praying that we might act only on the defensive; at least till the other Colonies were consulted. Some declared themselves of the same opinion. Others thought that now was the time to strike, and cut off the troops before they were reënforced; and then, said they, the day will be our own. As if Great Britain could not replace three thousand men, nor land at any other place than Boston! By the way, I do not see what mighty advantage can accrue to us by getting possession of Boston; none, I am sure, which can countervail the loss of thousands in storming the town, which will immediately be beat to pieces by the men-of-war. I had twenty to one rather make an attempt upon the Castle. Notwithstanding the warmth of some men, by all I can now learn, the only capital manœuvre at present will be the enlisting an army, and getting it disciplined, ready to oppose any violence which shall be offered by those who are inimical to us. And this plan I do not find that any one objects against: on the contrary, those judicious, moderate men who have hitherto opposed the measure, now think it necessary, and that the late expedition of the troops will justify us therein. The number agreed on by our Congress as their quota of thirty thousand, to be raised in New England, is thirteen thousand six hundred men, whom they have already begun to enlist. In consequence of this plan, I am persuaded that no immediate attack is intended, either upon Boston or the Castle. But, if what is reported to-day be true, I cannot pretend to say what the deceitful baseness of Gage and the indignation of our countrymen may produce. We are told that he assured the inhabitants of Boston, if they would deliver up their arms, he would permit the inhabitants to leave the town; that they have complied with the condition; and that now he refuses to let the people go. But all this wants confirmation.

“Josiah Quincy, Jr., Esq., is arrived at Gloucester, and the Selectmen of that town, in a letter I received this morning, say he is very ill, and near expiring. Lyde, with whom he came, sailed a good while before Callahan, who got in some time ago.

“I was this day informed by one of the Derbys, who spent the last evening with Callahan, that he, though inclined to Toryism (as the term is), confessed it was in vain to deny the distress already arising to Great Britain by means of the non-importation. Many of the discharged manufacturers have taken to the highways, armed, and the jails are filled with them already.

“The harbor of Marblehead is blocked up by a man-of-war; * ours is yet free.

“P. S. I hope nothing will prevent your communicating to me your plan of a pacification very soon.” †

* See Appendix, No. I., p. 541, note.

† The moderate sentiments expressed by Colonel Pickering at the above-mentioned meeting of officers seem to have been objected against him as a candidate for some civil appointment. See his letter to Dr. Holten, *post*, p. 89.

CHAPTER VI.

Colonel Pickering rejects Advice to join the Tories. — His “Plan of Discipline for a Militia.” — Appointed to Judicial Offices. — He and others form themselves into a Volunteer Company, and, through him, tender their Services to General Washington. — Chosen a Representative for Salem. — Salem ready for a Declaration of Independence.

AMONG the early friends of Colonel Pickering was Mrs. Higginson, the wife of John Higginson, the Register of Deeds for the county of Essex. Mr. Higginson died in 1774, leaving her a widow, with their only child, a daughter. She was a woman of a superior understanding; and, entertaining sentiments in favor of the government of Great Britain, and expressing them with more freedom than prudence, she rendered herself unpopular. In consequence, she thought herself obliged to leave the country, and took refuge in Halifax, Nova Scotia. There, disdaining to be dependent on charity, she opened a school for the support of herself and her daughter; but, in 1782, before the termination of the Revolutionary war, they returned to the neighborhood of Salem, choosing to subject themselves to persecution from a few malevolent or narrow-minded Whigs, in preference to remaining in exile. Soon after the peace, they established a school in Salem, which enjoyed a high reputation for many years, first under their joint care, and subsequently under that of Miss Higginson alone, who survived her mother. For both of them Colonel Pickering cherished through

life a most affectionate regard. Mrs. Higginson wrote to him, from Marblehead, in April, 1775 (probably after the battle of Lexington), as follows : —

“ As I fully believe our long acquaintance has produced a sincere and lasting friendship for each other, notwithstanding our widely differing in sentiment as to politics, you will, I hope, forgive my troubling you. It has appeared plain to me, that you, from the native goodness of your heart, never thought things would be carried the lengths they are. I, who have lived longer in this wicked world, and seen so much of it, have ever been fearful of what is now like to take place. I cannot but say, I am anxious for all my friends, and particularly for you, and, as I judge you have a fair opening, wish you to make a handsome retreat in season. You never can fall in with the cruelty and rage against the friends to government, many of whom you are personally acquainted with and esteem. I would, therefore, beg you to recollect what passed when you returned me here Friday last, and weigh well the matter. ‘The post of honor is a private station.’ ”

Colonel Pickering wrote an answer, dated Salem, May 2d, 1775.

“DEAR MADAM,

“You as rightly ‘as fully believe that we feel a sincere friendship for each other;’ and let it be lasting as our lives. I regret the separation which probably must soon take place; but God grant it may be a short one. . . . For many years I regarded you with heartfelt affection; but I must confess (and you will not think my friendship is now less warm and sincere because I confess the truth), that our repeated bickerings (I am sorry to use the word, but everything must yield to truth,) had sensibly lessened that affection, though it returned with all its force when I found we must part; and ’tis now heightened by

your very obliging, affectionate letter, which I have just received and read. Indeed, I formed a wish that you might not go, and was casting about in my mind in what manner I could provide for your safety and support, when Mr. Robie came in, and interrupted my anxious, but pleasing thoughts. When I last carried you to Marblehead, I had it in my heart to propose a mutual, cordial forgiveness of every thought, word, or look, which had ever borne the aspect of severity and unkindness; but I need not tell you, that I am less prone than many to make an ado about such matters. I felt all, and perhaps more than I could have expressed; and I entirely believed your feelings were kind and friendly as my own.

“You do me justice in believing that I have an aversion to cruelty and rage against those called ‘friends to government,’ some of whom I esteem highly, because I think them possessed of great integrity and worth.

“I agree with you, that a private station is often the post of honor; and I feel not the ambition for titles and high places, conspicuous in some men: at the same time, I think it my duty not to desert my country in that cause which I have hitherto espoused, — a cause which I believe to be founded in justice, although, in conducting it, many irregularities may have been committed; a cause which, if given up, or the supporters of it be overcome, Liberty itself, I fear, will expire; and at present I do not feel an inclination to survive the liberties of my country.

“But whatever becomes of me, may kind Heaven be *your* guardian and the guardian of your *lovely daughter*, whom I pray you to embrace for me.”

In 1775, Colonel Pickering published a duodecimo volume of about one hundred and fifty pages, with copper-plate engravings, entitled “An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia.” It was not a mere compilation, but a work containing many suggestions, the

result of his own observation and reflection.* Previously to its publication, Major Joseph Hawley, then a member of the Provincial Congress, wrote to him, under date of Cambridge, February 3d, 1775, —

“I hope that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you here, with the work, the very beginning of next week. I mention that time because I apprehend that the session is likely to be short; and I have conceived so highly of the general utility of the performance, and of the immediate great advantages that will accrue therefrom to the militia, as that it would be extremely afflictive to me to return home without assurance that the public would forthwith receive the benefit of your generous efforts to serve them. I am vastly mistaken if your plan will not be so fully approved by common sense, as that it must infallibly take, and certainly balk all the attempts of envy to disparage it. . . .

“I am, Sir, with great and most sincere esteem,” &c.

In a letter dated Watertown, January 10th, 1776, Samuel Phillips, Jr., (subsequently the founder of Phillips Academy, at Andover,) exhibits an instance of his patriotism and of his liberality. He says, —

“I have only time to thank you for your favors, and express my satisfaction on the prospect of the public’s being served so materially as I think they must be by a recommendation of your ‘Plan of Discipline.’ Be this as it may, if

* He devised an expeditious method of sizing a company, which, he says, was “particularly adapted to a militia, for whom a size-roll, as used in the army, would be of little service, on account of the perpetual changes of the persons or sizes of the men. . . . It was first published in 1769, in the ‘Essex Gazette’ of October 24th, whilst the troops were in Boston, and was, I am informed, immediately adopted by one or more of the regiments in sizing the main guard, which, being composed of men taken from every company in the regiment, is in a situation similar to that of the militia, with respect to the continual change of persons.” — *Plan of Discipline*, p. 68, note. — Another method is practised now, suited to a different mode of forming a company.

my life is spared, *you* shall not be at one farthing's expense on account of any failure in the sale. Should the community be so blind as not to avail themselves of so important improvements as you have put in their power, I shall be proud to be any way accessory to the preventing a burden falling on any person by means of his exertions for the general good, especially when such exertions were attended with no small expense."

On the 4th of March, 1776, Colonel Pickering answered Mr. Phillips : —

"I cannot sufficiently acknowledge your goodness manifested in your letter of January 10th. Such an instance of unexampled generosity will for ever demand my gratitude. You might well suppose I had not received that letter, seeing I neglected to answer it. But, believe me, dear Sir, that I was neither insensible of the obligations laid on me by such a favor so kindly offered, nor wanting in respect to the noble, generous, amiable author of it. I speak my sober sentiments, for I love you too well to flatter you, and I hope you think me too honest to be capable of it."

By a Resolve of the Council and the House of Representatives of Massachusetts Bay of May 1st, 1776, —reciting that "the 'Plan of Military Discipline,' lately published by Timothy Pickering, Esq., appears to this Court to be well adapted to the use and practice of a militia, as it contains all the motions in the manual exercise that are necessary and useful, and is not, like the Sixty-fourth, Norfolk and others, clogged with many superfluous motions, which only serve to burden the memory and perplex the learner; and as it also contains many useful manœuvres, &c., not published in the Sixty-fourth,"—it was ordered, that this "Plan of Discipline" should, for the future, be used and practised by the militia of the Colony. In the same year the book

passed to a second edition. It was superseded by the work afterwards published by Baron Steuben ; but so late as March 4th, 1799, General Epaphras Hoyt, of Deerfield, who had written a treatise for the instruction of the militia of Massachusetts, sent a copy of his work to Colonel Pickering, with the remark, "It is with pleasure I acknowledge my indebtedness to the 'Elements of Evolutions and Principles of Manœuvres' in your 'Plan of Discipline for a Militia.' Of these I have made free use," &c.

Although Colonel Pickering was not a well-read lawyer, the legal knowledge which he had acquired, his practical good sense, industry, and application to business, (to say nothing of his zeal on the side of the Colonies in their contest with the mother country,) recommended him to the government of the Province for judicial offices. In September, 1775, he was commissioned as a Justice of the Peace ; and, as such, he took his place in the Court of Sessions. In the same autumn he was appointed a Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex. After the July term in 1775, the sittings of this Court were suspended until July term in 1776, at which, and the succeeding term in September, he sat on the bench. On the 12th of December, 1775, he was commissioned and sworn as the sole Judge of the maritime court* for the counties of Suffolk, Essex, and Middlesex. This was an office of high responsibility ; for, as a great many privateers were fitted out by merchants and others in the counties of Suffolk and Essex, the cases brought before the Court for adjudication were numer-

* Under a statute of Massachusetts, passed in 1775, entitled "An Act for the encouraging the fixing out of armed vessels to defend the sea-coasts of America."

ous, and in some of them property to a large amount was in question.*

It seems that Colonel Pickering, being a candidate for appointment to some judicial office, was objected to on account of his remarks at the meeting of militia officers at Cambridge, just after the battle of Lexington.† In consequence, he wrote the following letter to his friend Dr. Samuel Holten : —

“SALEM, October 16th, 1775.

“DEAR SIR,

“I cannot forbear expressing my surprise at the principle advanced by a certain gentleman, with respect to the appointment of *civil* officers. To be consistent, he should go one step farther; or, rather, he might be more explicit; and say, that unless a man have a brawny arm and the heart of a lion, or, in other words, if he possess not the prime qualities of an *executioner*, he is unfit for a *judge*! But, for my own part, I would choose to bear the *reproach* of humanity, and a tender feeling for my brethren of mankind, especially my fellow-citizens, on the point of being exposed to all the calamities, the numberless calamities, of civil war, rather than, upon opposite principles, be advanced to the highest posts, and so possess, with infamy, the reward of savage ferocity and barbarism. What does common sense pronounce to be the proper qualifications of a judge? Are they other than these, — integrity, ability, and knowledge of the law? Who, in searching for a judge, a discerner between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, would, before all things, inquire for a man of conquering attributes, — for a hero?

“With regard to the instance in question, 'tis true I differed in opinion from some others. I said we were not prepared for war, and that war to me appeared not unavoid-

* See the letter to Jacob Dodge, *ante*, p. 79.

† See his letter to Paine Wingate, *ante*, p. 80.

able : hence arose my wishes still longer to forbear avowed hostilities. Dr. Warren — a man deservedly esteemed and honored — urged strenuously the pushing into Boston and cutting off the troops before a reënforcement should arrive. I declared instantly my opinion, that it was then impracticable. I know my opinion did not prevent it ; but it was not done. And were I now to say, even now the Colonies are unprepared for war, the declaration would not be *wholly* destitute of truth. Ask General Washington : he'll tell you he is obliged to remain most mortifyingly inactive, and receive, without reply, the enemy's unceasing insults. This he declared to me last week. But, admitting my opinion to be unfounded, — must I from thence be concluded my country's enemy, or timid friend? Suffer me to mention a fact. In 1745, in our House of Representatives, this question was agitated : Is it practicable to take Louisburg? It was long and calmly debated, and at length determined in the affirmative by a majority of *one voice only*. What now was to be done with the minority? Should they be expelled the House because they were less sanguine than their brethren, and be excluded from offices? The cases, I think, are not unlike. The question being once determined, the minority were as active as their opponents in setting forward the expedition ; and, by a remarkable series of fortunate events, it happily succeeded. God grant our present enterprise may be alike successful ! My efforts have not been wanting, to the utmost of my ability ; and, had I been actually a member of the army, I could scarcely have spent more time in its service. Since the 19th of April, one month would much more than comprise all my labor and attention to my own affairs. And a hundred pounds, lawful money, would not tempt me again to go through the application and fatigue of writing my military treatise. You will, Sir, excuse this tedious epistle. I am bound, in justice to myself, to mention these things, to show how extremely unreasonable it would be to refuse me such offices as I am qualified to discharge for the trifling cause referred to, or rather for no cause at all.

I do not say this because I regret my missing a certain appointment. I repeat what I told you, — that, whatever I may be hereafter, when study and experience have matured my judgment, I am at present unfit for that important trust. Had the appointment taken place, I think I must have declined it, lest I should by accepting it disgrace myself and injure and dishonor my country. For the *present* is the most important period since the Colony was founded; and never was there a greater necessity of filling the offices of government with men of integrity, ability, and knowledge, both on account of the difficulty of the times, and that our adversaries and posterity [may have no ground] for vilifying, stinging reflections; for sorry should I be to see the Colony again reproached, and its senators and leaders styled, ignominiously, '*Dii minorum gentium.*'*

"I do not repeat my petition. You know me; so do *others*; and your discernment, and sense of the dignity becoming freemen, will lead you to expect no servile entreaties from me. A slave may present them at the shrine of power; but a liberal mind will reject the offering with disdain.

"I am, Sir, with great regard, your obliged friend," &c.

Soon afterward Dr. Holten wrote the following:—

"WATERTOWN, November 3d, 1775.

"I congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Essex, and one of the Quorum for said county; and when it is fully known to you the part I took in your favor, I make no doubt you will consider me as a true friend, and acting upon no other principles than to promote the welfare and prosperity of my country."

Colonel Pickering replied, November 15th, 1775,—

* See Hutchinson's "History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay," Vol. II. p. 3.

“I thank you for your kind congratulations on my appointment to the offices you mention. I have at no time doubted your being my real friend. But (as you intimate) every act of friendship ought to be exercised in perfect consistency with the welfare and prosperity of one’s country; and, if I should ever so far mistake my talents as to request an employment incompatible with those supreme considerations, ’tis my wish that my friends may as strenuously oppose it, as in other cases I could pray them to espouse my interest.”

Colonel Pickering wrote the following letter to General Washington, and was himself one of the volunteers therein mentioned; as is shown by the General’s answer.

“SALEM, January 31st, 1776.

“SIR,

“The General Court of this Colony having, pursuant to your request, issued orders for raising upwards of four thousand men to serve, in the army that is under your Excellency’s immediate command, till the first day of April next, and of that number directed that ninety-one be enlisted in the town of Salem, in consequence thereof the militia were mustered and the resolves of the Court read to them, and the importance of manning the lines at Cambridge and Roxbury was urged; but, great numbers of the inhabitants being at sea, many impressed on board the British ships, a considerable number in the American armed vessels and privateers, one hundred employed as a sea-coast guard, and perhaps double that number already in the army, — of the residue, two or three only presented themselves to serve on the common establishment of the army. We were therefore induced to try another method, and the Committee of Safety gave the enlisting orders to a worthy man and good soldier who had served as a Lieutenant in the army the last campaign, and offered a month’s pay in advance to all who would enlist under him. But this measure also

proved ineffectual. Hence the persons whose names are subjoined, inhabitants of the town of Salem, convinced that 'tis of the last importance to the United Colonies, and essential to the safety of this Colony, to defend the lines at Cambridge and Roxbury, have agreed (as 'tis not in their power to do anything more or better) to form themselves into a company of volunteers, to serve in the army till the first day of April next *without pay*; and they now, Sir, beg leave to tender themselves to your Excellency, to be employed as you shall think best; and pray they may, by the bearer, who is one of the company, be made acquainted with your Excellency's pleasure."

An answer was returned by General Washington, under date of Cambridge, February 1st, 1776.

"SIR,

"Your favor of yesterday I received, and am sorry to hear that the quota of militia which the town of Salem was to furnish, by resolve of the Honorable General Court, cannot be had.

"The generous tender of services made by you, Sir, and the rest of the volunteers, claims a return of my sincere thanks. Should I have an occasion to call upon them, I shall do it; at present, I wish them to continue at Salem, and to hold themselves in readiness.

"I am," &c.

The town of Salem, in May, 1776, voted to send Representatives to the General Court, to be chosen by *differently colored balls*; and Colonel Pickering was chosen in that singular mode; but such an election was held to be void. On the 4th of June he was reëlected in due form of law. The town, in advising their Representatives, say, that, if Congress shall declare the independence of the Colonies, "we are ready to abide by the decision."

CHAPTER VII.

Colonel Pickering volunteers a second Time. — Marches a Regiment of Militia to the State of New York. — It becomes a Part of General Heath's Command. — Heath's Inefficiency. — Various Incidents of the Expedition.

IN 1776, July 4th and 13th, it was resolved by the General Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, that the Commissary appointed to furnish the sea-coast men stationed at Salem be directed to furnish the company of matrosses, to be raised and stationed at Salem, with all necessaries agreeably to the sea-coast establishment, and that this company be under the order and direction of Colonel Pickering, and, in case of his absence from Salem, of Major Joseph Sprague.

In a preceding chapter* it is stated that a regiment of militia, numbering a little more than seven hundred men, furnished by the county of Essex, was placed under the command of Colonel Pickering, and was called into actual service, and that it performed the campaign in the States of New York and New Jersey. The following narrative of the expedition is taken from Colonel Pickering's journal and letters.

He left Salem on the 24th of December, and, by the way of Boston, Walpole, and Attleboro', arrived at Providence on the 26th.

In a letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated Providence, December 27th, he writes, —

* Chapter V. pp. 78, 79.

"I arrived here yesterday about eleven o'clock, A. M., and was surprised at meeting Dr. [Archelaus] Putnam, who, with the rest of the Salem company, I supposed, had been far beyond Providence; but I found General Lincoln had stopped them, and he yet detains us till he receives orders, from the Assembly of our State, either to proceed or stay here. The latter will be extremely agreeable to us, if compatible with the general good; and, considering the proximity of the enemy (they being several thousand strong at Rhode Island), it appeared to me, from what the General remarked on the state of matters, that he judged it would be expedient that about three thousand of the Massachusetts militia should tarry here."

"*Journal.* — The 28th, at evening, received General Lincoln's orders to march my regiment for Danbury the next day at noon (Sunday). I gave orders accordingly to the captains, and the regiment marched between twelve and one."

On the 30th he set off with General Lincoln and his aids-de-camp, and Brigadier-General Moulton and Brigade-Major Burnham. Passing through Coventry, Windham, Hartford, &c., they arrived on the 2d of January, 1777, at Danbury, where Colonel Pickering remained until the 13th. On the 2d, at Southbury, they heard of the capture of the Hessians at Trenton.

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"DANBURY, January 12th, 1777.

"Until this morning I expected to go into the Jerseys, but have received orders to go to North Castle, about twenty-seven miles from Danbury, towards New York. . . . Part of my regiment are gone to Peekskill, but are to go down to North Castle, to which place I have ordered those companies of my regiment now here. I go myself to-morrow morning by sunrise, in company with Mr. [Francis] Cabot, for North Castle.

"I arrived at Danbury on Thursday night, the 2d of January, in company with General Lincoln, who, going on the next day for Peekskill, directed me to tarry here, to forward the militia as they arrived. Two companies in my regiment are not yet come in — Danvers and Marblehead.

"I have been most kindly entertained here at the house of Mr. John McLean, a wealthy, worthy, sensible Scotchman, most zealously attached to the public cause of America, and who, with a degree of indignation, mentions the ingratitude of his countrymen and other foreigners, who have made their fortunes in America, and yet are now opposing its best interests, the essential interests of the country subdued and cultivated by those men whose children those ungrateful wretches are now striving to subject to the yoke of tyranny. This good man I shall ever remember with respect and love."

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"BEDFORD [N. Y.], January 14th, 1777.

"Yesterday I walked from Danbury to this place — twenty long miles — in company with Mr. Cabot and two other gentlemen. I am now within about six miles of our headquarters at North Castle, where, I am here informed, General Heath is arrived, and is to command. My regiment, with a number of other Massachusetts regiments, are ordered to North Castle. In my next, perhaps, I shall be able to tell you something of our operations. God grant us success, and restore me with honor to my beloved."

"*Journal*.* — Tuesday, January 14th. — Walked from Bedford to North Castle, about six miles. About four o'clock marched with four companies of my regiment thence to Tarrytown, about ten miles. According to general orders, formed van, flank, and rear guards. Reached Tarrytown between eight and nine o'clock. No barracks provided, nor barrack-master to find them ; but was obliged to ramble from

* See a contemporary diary in "Heath's Memoirs," pp. 105-115.

house to house till after ten, when the companies were covered. Invited by the General [Lincoln] to keep at his quarters, which I did; now, with him, for the first time since I marched, lodging on the floor. Wednesday and Thursday, the rest of my regiment got in, and the whole were furnished with ammunition and provisions for an expedition to Kingsbridge and its environs.

“Friday, January 17th. — The regiments (Lovell’s, Thacher’s, Frost’s, and mine, there being no more with General Lincoln) completed their preparations for the expedition, and the three latter were ordered to parade at Dobbs’s Ferry, ten miles from Kingsbridge, at eleven o’clock at night, with the wagons, one to one hundred men. Lovell’s regiment marched over in the afternoon to join General Heath’s division. The regiments paraded punctually, and about twelve at midnight the whole marched off, my regiment leading, followed by one piece of artillery, brass six-pounder, commanded by Captain Fleeming (a Yorker), and then by Colonel Thacher’s regiment. Colonel Frost’s formed the van, flank, and rear guards. It was a cold, uncomfortable night. We reached Colonel Phillips’s, within about three miles of Kingsbridge, about four o’clock in the morning, which obliged us to halt an hour, that we might not arrive too soon. Then we marched on and reached the grounds towards Kingsbridge at broad daylight on Saturday morning. Saw some men coming out of a house, supposed to be soldiers; and by the General’s order I detached two companies (Ward’s and Evans’s) to intercept them and any others they might find. But they were a little too late, and strangers to the ground, without a guide; otherwise they would have surprised another party of thirty or forty, whom they saw running away, and who left their blankets, &c., in their barracks, which our soldiers afterwards took away; and there and at other places, in the course of the day, they picked up considerable plunder. As soon as I had detached those two companies, by the General’s orders I ascended the hills, followed by Captain

Fleeming with his six-pounder, and advanced towards Spiten-Devil Creek, but had no guide, and knew not where to find it. Halted, advanced, and halted. The General left me, I knew not when, and went over to Valentine's Hill. I saw him not again till night. Between eleven and twelve at noon, received a written order from him, directed to Brigadier Moulton or me, to go to Spiten-Devil [Creek] with my regiment. I accordingly advanced again, but without a guide who could give us a just description of the route we were to take. Advanced with a small party to reconnoitre; discovered a few of the enemy near Kingsbridge, but saw no body of our troops on the other side to coöperate with us; and, after waiting some time, till towards sundown, hearing nothing further of the General, the men having had no sleep nor refreshment for the day, except a little frozen meat and bread, I retired; and in retiring met Chaplain Thaxter, with a message from the General for my return with my regiment and the artillery. The General ordered the troops to find cover for the night where they could,—in the woods, or by retiring to the nearest houses, after a proper guard was drawn out to remain on the hills northward of Fort Independence.

“In the forenoon a person came from Valentine's Hill, and informed that Colonel Thacher's regiment had gained possession of one fort, and had from thence fired on Fort Independence. But the fort gained proved afterwards to be only a poor work which the enemy abandoned, and which our troops then entered. In a word, the proceedings of the two divisions at the southward under Generals Heath, Wooster, Parsons, and Scott, were fruitless. Fort Independence General Heath summoned to surrender, but his demand was disregarded.

“Pursuant to the General's [Heath's] orders, the troops retired, except Colonel Frost's regiment, which encamped in the woods. General Lincoln and aids-de-camp, divers other officers, and myself, went to Colonel Phillips's, where we were entertained with the greatest politeness. The

Colonel is reported a Tory, and, as such, has been secured, but discharged on his parole. Nevertheless, whether it was policy, benevolence, or good breeding, a more agreeable reception I never met with.

“Sunday Morning, January 19th.—I returned to the former day’s grounds, and in the forenoon rode over with General Lincoln and Brigadier Moulton to confer with Generals Heath, Wooster, Parsons, &c. They concluded that it was practicable only to forage; having received information, by a deserter, that the enemy at Fort Independence and Kingsbridge were greatly reënforced. Then we returned to our quarters. The regiments were mustered, and their baggage put up, in order to march over towards General Heath’s division, to facilitate the execution of the intended plan; but, before night, General Heath sent an express to desire General Lincoln to make no movement, some interesting intelligence from General Washington rendering it expedient, as he said. We retired to quarters. General Lincoln, and son, and myself erected a hut with rails and straw, and lodged in the woods. This afternoon the wind got round to the southward, and the weather moderated.

“Monday, January 20th.—A pleasant day. Detached one hundred and sixty of my regiment, to be joined with detachments from Lovell’s, Thacher’s, and Frost’s,—in the whole, five hundred men,—for an expedition to be executed this day; but Generals Heath, Parsons, &c., came over, and, with General Lincoln, reconnoitred, and found their scheme impracticable. I was appointed to command the detachment, with Lieutenant-Colonel How of Thacher’s regiment, and Major — under me.

“Tuesday, January 21st.—Two field-pieces, covered by a hundred musketeers, were ordered to the hill near Spiten-Devil Creek, to fire a few shot at the enemy near Kingsbridge, which was done,—without doing any execution. The enemy returned the fire from a small field-piece, but they always overshot us. I went as a spectator. The distance was, I judged, about half a mile from the enemy.

They also fired several shot at us from the fort, or battery, northward of Fort Washington (which also was in sight, and distant, it is said, from Kingsbridge about four miles), at the distance, I judge, on a straight line, of about two miles. These were eighteen-pound shot, very well thrown. One struck and rebounded. As it rose we discovered it, and saw it moving slowly through the air, about fifty yards from us, till it pitched again, about seventy yards from where it struck first. At this time a party was ordered on fatigue in a neighboring wood, to make chandeliers and fascines for a breastwork to open on Kingsbridge, distant, perhaps, half a mile. Afterwards we returned to our quarters, — a new hut, nicely built, and covered with oak-leaves and brush, under Mr. Thaxter's direction.

“Wednesday, January 22d. — Paraded my regiment at daybreak. In the evening, having made a large fire before our hut, some sparks flew upon our roof, covered with oak leaves, and in a minute the whole was in flames; but we lost none of our baggage. This obliged us to find a house for the night; so we retired to General Moulton's quarters, and lodged on the floor. I slept well, and was recovered a little from a cold I caught on Saturday.

“Thursday, January 23d. — In the afternoon I detached three captains, four subalterns, seven sergeants, seven corporals, and one hundred and sixty privates, from my regiment, to be joined with detachments from Thacher's and Frost's regiments, making, in the whole, about four hundred rank and file, to parade at four o'clock next morning. I was directed to take the command of them, if my health would permit. I was not well of my cold, but I did not decline the command. This afternoon there was a skirmish between a party of Generals Heath's and Wooster's divisions and the enemy, southward of Fort Independence. A small number of the Americans were killed and wounded.

“At ten o'clock in the evening, received information that the detachments made in the afternoon were discharged, the matter being over for which they were intended. It began to snow in the evening.

“Friday, January 24th. The snow fell last night about three or four inches deep, and this morning it rained hard, by which the soldiers were generally wet, in their huts, through to their skins. General Lincoln sent Major Popkin, one of his aides-de-camp, to General Heath, for orders relative to the removing the troops, it being impossible for them to continue in their present situation, either with comfort and a possibility of preserving their health, or safety, — for their arms were wet and their ammunition would soon be spoiled. Major Popkin was gone four hours, being detained that General Heath might get intelligence from his advanced posts, and in endeavoring to persuade him to consent that General Lincoln’s division might retire to their old quarters at Tarrytown and Dobbs’s Ferry, to shift and dry their clothes, and refresh themselves, after their fatigues; but General Heath would consent only that they should retire about two and three miles to the nearest houses. But, notwithstanding, General Lincoln, upon considering the uncomfortable condition of his troops, and uselessness of their arms and ammunition, from their being so much wet, consented that we should proceed towards our old quarters, and in the mean time went to General Heath to induce him also to consent, saying, as he left me, that, if General Heath would not consent to a necessity so urgent, he must send an express to stop us. We accordingly began our march; but such had been the fatigues and distress of the men from cold and want of cover for the week past, that the impatience of great numbers carried them off without orders, and it was not without much difficulty that I could collect any to form a body capable of action, to secure our retreat. Indeed, the arms and ammunition in general were so damaged by the rain, that we could have made but a feeble resistance, had the enemy sallied. ’Tis true the storm rendered a sally improbable; besides, we moved off in silence.

“On the march, about half way between our late camp and Tarrytown, the Brigade-Major, Burnham, brought me General Heath’s positive orders to march to Miles Square. But it

was absolutely impracticable to execute them. A large proportion of the men had by this time arrived at their quarters, and full three fourths of my regiment were ahead of me, and I on foot, with my pack and large blanket at my back (which I chose to carry, that I might know what soldiers endured, and to make *them* more easy, seeing I endured the same fatigues).

“Besides, had my regiment been then embodied and under command, I should hardly have attempted to turn them about, to face, in the afternoon, a driving south-east storm of rain, when they had been wet to their skins many hours, and, for the reasons already mentioned, they could have yielded little assistance to General Heath, had we obeyed his orders. Indeed, it appeared to me to be downright cruelty to order them there, especially as no important advantage was held up to view to compensate the soldier's fatigue, nor, indeed, any reason mentioned, but the saving General Heath and his division the trouble of turning out of the houses they at that time occupied, and retiring to others a little more remote from the enemy; for, as to the enemy's taking possession of the ground he and we quitted, it was ridiculous to urge that as a reason for our tarrying; for, if we could not drive them from the naked hills, how could he expect to take Fort Independence, and destroy Kingsbridge, that is open to the fort? against which that he might try his twenty-four-pounder and howitz, General Heath also urged us to stay. These were his reasons for the orders he gave for our staying in our miserable huts, in cold and rain and snow, or of retiring only two or three miles to houses, where we had neither clothes to shift ourselves, nor any refreshment save beef and flour; for, when we left Tarrytown, a week before, we had orders to take only our blankets and axes, and the two days' provisions we had cooked, General Lincoln expecting but a short expedition. We did not even take our camp-kettles; and the troops, being detained, suffered a good deal from the want of them, eating their beef roasted (many without salt) on the coals, or held in the fire at the end of a stick sharpened and run through the slices.

Indeed, we were so lucky at this time as to get hard bread, a quantity of which had been prepared for the expedition; but this was soon gone, and for two thirds of the week flour was dealt out, which the soldiers made, some into cakes, and some into dumplings, boiled with their meat; for we at length had sent for our camp-kettles.

“We continued our route to our old quarters at Tarrytown and Dobbs’s Ferry.

“Thus ended our week’s expedition. After enduring a variety of hardships, we returned, doing nothing and getting nothing but the paltry booty of a few blankets, — about forty, — a box of candles, a parcel of osnaburgs, and about forty small arms, all not making a single wagon-load.

“The expedition was disgraceful.* We were to take Fort Independence, not by storm, for the whole army was militia, and the work was ditched, fraised, and surrounded by an *abatis*; not by regular approaches, for we had not a single intrenching tool; not by cannonade, for we had only three six-pounders. And yet, on the first morning we arrived, General Heath, with ridiculous parade and groundless, vain expectation, sent in a summons, demanding the surrender of the fort! The garrison must have been fools and arrant cowards to have regarded it. They did not regard it. After arriving at Morristown, I understood that part of the plan was to have taken New York itself.†

“The only fruit of the expedition, besides the trifling plunder above mentioned, was the carrying off some forage from West Chester and the manor of Fordham, the foragers being covered by Heath’s and Wooster’s divisions, and countenanced by ours. But, had the counsels of the commander-in-chief (General Heath) been decisive, and measures proper and effectual taken to execute them; had the only practicable measure (unprovided as we were with necessaries, and after the failures of the first morning) been

* See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. IV. pp. 280, note, 307, 308, note.

† See Letter of Washington to Heath, *ibid.* p. 280.

pursued, — *foraging*; all the wagons of the army might have been employed, and the whole forage carried off in three days, and the troops returned to their quarters. And apparent advantage hence arising would have made them more contented, even if their fatigues had been greater than they were; for the soldiers, constantly struggling with many difficulties and fatigues, and yet seeing no benefit arising, were angry and impatient.

“It seems the design of the expedition was, if possible, to take Fort Independence, destroy Kingsbridge, carry off forage, and alarm the enemy, so as to draw off from or prevent their reënforcing their army in the Jerseys.* But Fort Independence is not taken; Kingsbridge is not destroyed; the enemy has been but little alarmed, for it is now pretty clear they have not lessened their forces in the Jerseys, nor increased them at Fort Independence or Kingsbridge; at the latter they have been induced to throw up a little redoubt. We have, as before mentioned, carried off some forage.

“Saturday, January 25th, 1777. — Continued at Tarrytown and Dobbs’s Ferry; the men cleaning their guns, and changing and drying their ammunition, and drying their clothes.

“Sunday, January 26th. — Remained still at Tarrytown, and ordered the regiment to assemble in the afternoon to attend divine service; but about one o’clock received orders to march immediately to Colonel Phillips’s. This, it appeared to me, would be extremely inconvenient; for, as my regiment lay cantoned through a space of four miles, it must take so long a time to transmit orders to the several companies and for them to get ready, that I supposed we could not reach the place of our destination till nine o’clock at night, and then we must hunt for quarters in unknown houses. Besides, although I had given timely notice the day before to the commissary, and he had promised me he

* See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. IV. pp. 263, 266, 270, 280, 303, 306, 307.

would have the provisions ready in the morning, yet it was night before they arrived; by which means most of my regiment had no victuals for the day. Issued orders for the regiment to parade near Dobbs's Ferry at two o'clock, Monday morning, intending to be at Colonel Phillips's by broad daylight. But some companies did not parade in season, so that it was near seven o'clock when the regiment arrived at Phillips's. There, the moment I arrived, Brigadier Moulton's orders were delivered me, directing me to march to Tippet's Hill, near Spiten-Devil Creek. I proceeded upwards of two miles, and halted where we must turn off to the right to go to Spiten-Devil Creek, collected the field officers and captains, and told them that Captain Jackson, with his company of the train with a six-pounder, was to have come with us from Tarrytown, but had not obeyed his orders; that Brigadier Moulton, in his orders, said he should follow me with Colonel Thacher's regiment, but had not done it; that, therefore, if we advanced to Tippet's Hill, it might be in the power of the enemy to cut off our retreat; — and then put the question, whether we should *alone* advance to Tippet's Hill. They were unanimous in their opinion that we ought not to proceed any farther. I had previously sent guards to the most commanding eminences.

“At length General Lincoln arrived. I informed him of the reason of my halting. He entirely approved of my conduct, and added, that he had no intention that my regiment should proceed alone. Soon after our arrival where we halted, some of my sentries discovered half a dozen light-horsemen by Colonel Cortland's, between us and Fort Independence, for which place they soon scampered away. Thacher's regiment arrived; and four companies of mine were ordered to advance to Tippet's Hill to see that the way was clear, and to watch the enemy. When Captain Jackson came up, he was ordered, with his piece, to Tippet's Hill; but his horses tired by the way. So he returned, and all of us (it now being almost dark) retired to Colonel Phillips's, and the nearest houses round about and beyond his. I,

with Colonel Morrill, Dr. Putnam, and the Salem company, put up at Colonel Phillips's. We were kindly entertained. We remained here quietly the next day, Tuesday, January 28th, the succeeding night and following day, Wednesday, January 29th, and supposed we should abide there the third night; * but in the evening, about six o'clock, after it had been snowing several hours, I received General Lincoln's orders to parade my regiment at eight o'clock, and march to our old quarters at Dobbs's Ferry and Tarrytown. The orders came so late, my regiment was so scattered, and some of the wagoners being out of the way, it was past ten before we marched. It was warm, and snowy, and I did not arrive at my quarters till after two in the morning, and was as much fatigued as with the march of the 24th instant in the rain, although I now marched but eleven miles. After I had refreshed myself, at near four in the morning I lay down in my blanket and slept till day, about two hours and a half. Yet, notwithstanding the fatigue and so little sleep, I felt myself well and sprightly through the day, Thursday, January 30th."

In a letter of January 30th to Mrs. Pickering, having mentioned these two marches, he adds, —

"With a pack at my back both times. Yet I was but little wearied, and out-travelled multitudes of the common soldiers. My toils make me hungry. I eat meat two, and generally three, times a day, yet find no inconvenience therefrom. At dinner I rarely get anything but bread and meat; in the morning they are qualified with tea, coffee, or chocolate. This is a specimen of my manner of living."

And on February 2d he writes, "Cheese, butter, and milk are rarely to be met with."

"* The Colonel and his lady, particularly the latter, evidently began to be weary of us after the first night, although they continued to treat us politely, and fed the Doctor and me at their own table. When we departed, I thanked them for their hospitality. The Colonel said *they* were obliged to *me*."

Journal. — “Friday, January 31st. — Remained quiet at Tarrytown. In the evening received orders to march my regiment, with bag and baggage, the next day, to the houses next beyond White Plains, on the road to New York. Issued orders accordingly. But, the regiment being posted in scattered houses through an extent of six miles, it was impossible to notify them in such season as for them to get ready to march early. It was two in the afternoon of Saturday when we began our march, and we arrived at our new quarters in the evening. I dropped the companies as we passed, — the first at about seven, and the last about eleven, miles from Tarrytown. I attended the quartering the whole before I went to my own lodgings, which were near the centre of the cantonment, at Mr. Griffin’s, a house on a hill, about a quarter of a mile from the road, the same house which General Howe made his headquarters last summer, after the battle at White Plains, from whence it is distant about two miles. The old gentleman has no child of his own, but a second wife; whose former husband (Duzenborough) died at about forty years of age. A few years before his death he weighed upwards of three hundred and eighty pounds, and at his death was supposed to weigh four hundred. He was about six feet high, and died of excessive fat.

“Mr. Griffin informed me that Colonel Carr, of the Twenty-ninth Regiment, was brought to his house from the battle of the White Plains, and died there of his wounds, and in the very bed-room where I lodged.

“Sunday, February 2d. — Remained quiet at Mr. Griffin’s, in the manor of Scarsdale.”

In a letter dated “Manor of Scarsdale, two miles south of White Plains, February 2d,” to Mrs. Pickering, he says, —

“I am informed by General Lincoln, that there are three thousand tons of hay and grain on the lands round about

here, as computed by the New York Committee, which it is intended to cart off, to prevent their falling into Howe's hands; and the Massachusetts and Connecticut militia are to furnish guards to secure the persons employed in doing it, or, in the military phrase, to cover the foragers. This being the business, and of considerable importance, I imagine we may remain here ten days or a fortnight. Where we shall go then, I know not. I, a few days since, thought we should have been called into the Jerseys; but it will be so late when we have finished our present business, that it will seem hardly worth while, for half our time of service is already expired.

"Since we left Danbury (January 13th), we have been almost continually on the move, and I have gone through as much fatigue as almost any person in my regiment; yet I am as well and hearty as ever I was in my life."

The letter was accompanied with cuttings of the black Burgundy grape for his brother, of which he says, "An excellent fruit, and so hardy that the vine will bear our winters without extraordinary pains. . . . I am very desirous of having the grape propagated among us."

Journal. — "Monday, February 3d. — Still at Mr. Griffin's. . . .

"Tuesday, February 4th. — Still at Griffin's. Went to General Lincoln's quarters, where I dined, in company with General Heath.

"Wednesday, February 5th. — Remained at Mr. Griffin's. Detached three captains, six subalterns, twelve sergeants, twelve corporals, and one hundred and twenty-eight privates, to be joined by detachments from Thacher's regiment and the Connecticut troops, to assemble, at one in the morning, at Stephen Ward's house, seven miles from Fort Independence, (ostensibly to reënforce the picket, but really,) intended to surprise an out-guard of the enemy, kept at

Valentine's house, about a mile on this side the fort, and to take one Williams, a Tory, who gave the garrison information of our first approach on the 17th of January. The detachments assembled; but, like other enterprises under the direction of our commander-in-chief (G. H.) [General Heath], the design was not prosecuted.

"Thursday, February 6th. — The detachment from my regiment returned, most of them in the morning, having no provisions to continue out during the day (indeed they could have done no service by continuing). The detachment from Captain Ward's company only, remained with Colonel Enos (who was to command the whole), and took a tour with him to New Rochelle. They returned at night, fatigued and hungry."

In a letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated "Manor of Scarsdale, about thirteen miles eastward from Kingsbridge, Friday, February 7th, 1777, evening," he wrote, —

... "Yet think not, from my impatience to see you, that I am discontented with my service. It is for you that I wish to return; and but for you I know not whether I should not devote myself to the military service of my country while it should remain in arms. Not that I am fond of war: '*Peace is my dear delight.*' But the avarice, the ambition and tyranny, of a few fellow-mortals drive *peaceful* men to arms.

"I am just informed by a messenger from General Lincoln, that we are shortly to march to the Jerseys, to join General Washington. I wish we had done it a month ago. We are all sick of the insignificant expedition this way under the direction of General Heath. His management has confirmed the opinion I ever entertained concerning him. He has, in the estimation of every discerning man, acquired nought but disgrace. I speak my mind freely; you know I am apt to do it. And, if my own conduct should be as unworthy, I will not blame the world for reproaching me

with it. But I trust in God I shall do my duty. Join, my dear life, my other self, join your prayers with mine, to the Great Supreme, the Lord of Hosts, that He, in the hour of danger, in the day of battle, should I be called to it, would support and protect me; or, if I fall, that it may be with honor to myself and advantage to my country. And then, O Parent in heaven! be a father to the fatherless, and the widow's God! My amiable girl, be not discouraged. *Heaven WILL protect me, and restore me to your arms.* How often (you have heard me remark) have I thought many events against me! Yet, by those means, God, in whom I trusted, hath blessed me beyond my wishes. My engaging in the war grieved you to the heart. But doubt not that it will eventually add to our mutual felicity. . . .

“When my ears are blessed with the news of one propitious event,* I shall be at ease.

Journal. — “Friday, February 7th, evening. — At half-after eight o'clock, received of the Brigade-Major the following order from General Lincoln (who received the order from General Heath not till seven o'clock), to wit: ‘Colonel Pickering’s Regiment will furnish three captains, three subalterns, nine sergeants, nine corporals, and one hundred and ninety-one privates, including those who are for the foraging guard, to be paraded at sunrise to-morrow morning at Ward’s. Colonel Pickering will take the command of those from General Lincoln’s division. North Street, near White Plains, February 7th, 1777.’

“I was more angry than surprised, that General Heath should issue an order so unreasonably late, to be executed the next morning by sunrise, although my regiment was cantoned through a space of five miles, which he well knew. But it was of a piece with his other proceedings. I directed

* His eldest child, the late John Pickering, was born on the day on which this letter was written.

the adjutant immediately to make out the details for the detachment, and deliver them to the several captains, which he did. I marched from my quarters just after daylight (it was cloudy), and arrived with the detachment at Ward's about twenty minutes, or, at most, half an hour, after sunrise, distant from my quarters about five miles. There I found Lieutenant-Colonel How, of Thatcher's Regiment, with a detachment of about one hundred and forty privates, besides officers. About nine o'clock, Major Wilcox, of the Connecticut militia, with near a hundred men, joined us. Their orders were similar to my own, — only to parade at Ward's at sunrise. Our detachments, united, formed a body of about four hundred and thirty or four hundred and forty, including officers. Here we waited impatiently, expecting further orders, and the coming of wagons to forage, which, it was intimated to me by the Brigade-Major, was intended. But after thus waiting till eleven in the forenoon, and receiving no orders, and the wagons not coming (saving those of my regiment, which came by my direction), Colonel How and Major Wilcox asking what should be done, I replied, that in my opinion we should be justified if we returned to our quarters; that it was a lowery day; and sometimes rainy, which might discourage the foragers, and prevent their coming; nevertheless, as I had no doubt it was intended to forage, if it was agreeable to them, we would march back; and, if we met the foragers, or received further orders, well; we would proceed accordingly; otherwise, return to our quarters. They approved the proposal. I marched, and was followed by Colonel How. But Wilcox's detachment, I afterwards found, stayed at Ward's. After retiring about a mile and a half, we met Mr. Tompkins, one of the directors for foraging, with the following orders: —

“ ‘HEAD-QUARTERS KINGSTREET, February 8th, 1777.

“ ‘SIR,

“ ‘You are to take the command of the troops that are to parade at or near the house of Stephen Ward this morning, designed to cover the foragers, and to burn such forage and

grain as the committee of the Convention of the State of New York may think proper to direct.

“‘ You are to keep your detachment in good order, strictly forbid and prevent plundering and every species of insult and abuse. You are not to allow, in any case, any house to be fired, or even barn, unless specially ordered to do the latter by the committee.

“‘ You are carefully to cover the foragers, and keep out guards and scouts for your own security. The committee will determine the limits within which you are to destroy the forage. You will be careful not to exceed them.

“‘ I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“‘ W. HEATH, M. G.

“‘ The Commanding Officer of the Foraging Party
parading at or near Stephen Ward’s.’

“ These orders were delivered to me sealed up (about half after eleven o’clock), with the following indorsement :—

“‘ SIR,

“‘ The committee are of opinion that it will not answer this day to burn any forage, and have sent Mr. Tompkins to pilot the troops under your command to such places as will be best adapted for covering the foraging teams which are this day employed in carting forage from New Rochelle.

“‘ By order,

“‘ W. DUER.

“‘ 8th February, 10 o’clock.’

“ Having read these orders, I led back the troops to Ward’s, and thence proceeded with the whole, conducted by the guide, to the places best adapted for covering the foragers, where we remained till near four in the afternoon, when Mr. Tompkins directed us into a cross-road, so as to fall in the rear of the teams. We proceeded accordingly; but he afterwards came to us and said the teams he found sufficiently guarded, and that we need not wait; upon which we returned to our quarters.*

“ * While we waited for the foragers, their director rode up to the corner where we waited; but, in an instant, suspecting us to be enemies, started and

“The march to Ward’s finished our trifling, inconsequential expeditions under General Heath. I recollect not one where the measures were timely and duly taken for execution. In the last, Mr. Tompkins informed me it was intended to go to Frog’s Point, a good way beyond Fort Independence, in order to bring off and destroy such forage as the committee should think proper; but, as this would leave the enemy in our rear, the committee expected General Heath would have furnished them with seventeen hundred men, that the enemy might not have it in their power to cut off their retreat; and the want of this, more than the foul day, I suppose, induced the committee to write me as they did.

“After we had been loitering several days in the environs of Fort Independence, and broken the carriages of two six-pounders by firing a few ineffectual shot; after the first and best time for taking the fort, when the troops were fresh, the regiments full, the men in spirits, and the enemy under some surprise, was lost; after the enemy, from our inactivity, began to despise us; after they had had an opportunity of getting one or two twelve-pounders into their fort, to build a redoubt at Kingsbridge, and to get in the best manner prepared, — General Heath sent to Peekskill for a twenty-four-pounder and a howitz, with balls and shells. He tried both. With the twenty-four-pounder, it seems, one man was killed in the fort, and the head of a puncheon of rum knocked in; but with the third shot the carriage broke. A few shells were thrown, and broke in the air, as I think I was informed. Soon afterwards the whole army retired from ten to fifteen miles from the enemy, as is before mentioned.

“A day or two before we left White Plains, a party of Yorkers went in the night down towards the fort, and concealed themselves in a house, in order to trepan some of the light-horse, who daily made excursions six miles from

rode off. I called and assured him we were friends, and after a little parley he was convinced. The matter afforded us a little diversion.”

the fort. The light-horse came out as usual, and the ambuscade killed one, took his horse, and wounded another; and a second horse, it was said, in running off, broke his neck.

“Sunday, February 9th. — Went to General Lincoln’s quarters. He gave me orders to march my regiment next Tuesday morning, at eight o’clock, from White Plains to King’s Ferry (over the North River), and to join General Washington with all possible despatch. I issued orders accordingly.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Major Bland, of Virginia. — Major Broughton's Gallantry. — Hardships and Sickness of a Pennsylvania Battalion. — Interviews with General Washington. — Massachusetts Troops praised for good Order. — Colonel Pickering appointed Adjutant-General of the Army of the United States. — Letters of General Washington and Colonel Pickering on the Subject.

COLONEL PICKERING'S journal and letters go on to detail the incidents of the march of his regiment until its time of service expired, and of his journey home to Salem.

Journal. — "Monday, February 10th. — The regiment drew four days' provisions for their march, and cooked two of them.

"Tuesday, February 11th. — A thick snow-storm, which continued all day, and prevented our march. The snow fell five or six inches deep. I supposed also that Colonel Thacher's regiment, which marched on Monday, would not march from North Castle in the snow, and so, if we marched that day, we should find no barracks at night; and my conjecture was right, Colonel Thacher himself having left North Castle on Wednesday, only about an hour before I arrived there; and two of his wagons I overtook on the road thither.

"Wednesday, February 12th. — Marched with three companies from White Plains at half after eight o'clock, and arrived at North Castle church, distant fifteen miles from my quarters, at a little after one o'clock, afternoon; and all my regiment came up by three, and went to such houses as they could find for barracks. Some of the wagons did not get up till near night. Just after sunset I hired two horses,

and set off with Mr. Cabot to go to Crump Pond, eight miles and a half, to find Colonel Thacher, to know when his regiment would be out of my way, and to inquire where my regiment could find cover the next night; got back just after eleven at night, cold and hungry. Went to bed (on the floor, with my blanket) about twelve; slept about four hours between that and full day. The landlord, an Irishman, blunt, but hospitable."

Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife from North Castle the 12th of February,—

"I continue in good health, and hope to return so . . . the beginning of April. Nevertheless, if the General [Washington] should desire my regiment to tarry a little while, I trust I shall not refuse to gratify him and serve my country."

Journal. — "Thursday, February 13th. — Marched by half after eight in the morning for Crump Pond, or Hanover, and the companies went to quarters, scattered through a space of five miles, some companies and men of Thacher's regiment being in our way. Ordered the companies to march the next day, by nine o'clock at farthest, for Peekskill.

"Friday, February 14th. — Not being able to get anything else, I ate a piece of bread and drank some water, and set off (on horseback) before sunrise for Peekskill, suspecting I should find Thacher's regiment in my way; and so it turned out. Colonel Thacher told me his provisions for his regiment could not be drawn as ordered, and that caused his delay. He further said he could get no hay at the Quartermaster-General's stores, and that some of his men were obliged to go back for want of quarters, and others made fires in the woods among the snow. For these reasons I sent orders for my regiment to stop and retire to their quarters at Hanover. But some were so advanced that they chose to try to find new quarters, which they effected; others retired. Waited on General McDougall,

and asked his advice respecting the march of my regiment, and told him of the difficulties about provisions, which he said he would endeavor to remedy. Rode back to Hanover in the afternoon, and gave orders for the march of the regiment.

“Saturday, February 15th. — The regiment marched to Peekskill, and found Thacher’s still there. Drew two days’ rations, but obliged to wait for them till afternoon before the whole were served; and, Colonel Thacher’s men not being out of the way, many of my companies were obliged again to retire for quarters. I gave them orders to be at Peekskill next morning as early as possible, by nine o’clock at farthest, to cross the river.

“Evening. — Heard Colonel Thacher’s regiment had at length crossed the river. Peekskill is a small village, in a low vale, between two large hills, and contains, perhaps, forty small dwelling-houses.

“Sunday, February 16th, ten o’clock. — The companies that retired not yet arrived; but others, lying between Peekskill and the ferry, were now beginning to cross the river. — One o’clock, all the companies being arrived save one, and that not being likely to come up soon, I left Peekskill and went down about five miles to King’s Ferry; about three, crossed the river, and went to Colonel Hay’s, about three miles from the ferry, (he is a commissary for troops,) where I found Brigadier Moulton and Major Burnham, Colonel Lasher and lady, Mr. Thomas Smith and lady, and Mr. John Smith. The Smiths are brothers to Mrs. Hay and to the celebrated William Smith, author of the ‘History of New York.’ Here I supped, and spent a cheerful evening.

“Monday, February 17th. — Met with some difficulty in procuring baggage-wagons, for of those impressed by the Assistant Quartermaster few appeared; but Ward’s and Moody’s companies being at length furnished, they marched, after the others, for Ramapo, about fourteen miles distant. Captain Marsh’s got over the river this day, drew provisions,

and marched on. I followed them, in company with Quartermaster North, and reached Ramapo before night. Several companies stopped between this place and Kakiyat. From the river to Ramapo you meet only with scattered farmers' houses, some of logs, but generally of stone.

"Tuesday, February 18th. — Reached Pompton Plains, about sixteen miles from Ramapo. The whole road was plain, between a ridge of mountains on the north and hills to the south.

"Wednesday, February 19th. — Went with the companies within about five and six miles of Morristown, where I was informed the regiment could easily find cover; intending the next day to march in, in regimental order. But, the houses being filled with troops, I was obliged to order the captains to find cover a little way back, which they did; and I went forward myself to Morristown, to General Lincoln. I informed him of my situation, and asked his orders for the next day. He directed me to march to Morristown, draw provisions, and take quarters within four or five miles of the town. I returned and gave orders accordingly to the regiment. This night I retired through a wood with Captain Ward and mess, about half a mile from the road, to one Copperthwait's, — a house never occupied by soldiers; a hospitable landlord, and a handsome, modest landlady, a native of Taunton, in Massachusetts Bay.

"Thursday, February 20th. — Went to Morristown,* and stopped a little while at General Lincoln's quarters, where I found the landlord (a Yorker) very obliging, as well as his lady. Here was Major Bland, a Virginian, who commanded six troops of Virginia light-horse, — an excellent corps, I was informed. The Major appeared to be a man of sense, knowledge, and stability, every way calculated to make an excellent officer.

"Friday, February 21st. — We marched to Bound Brook,†

* This is a pleasant town, and has in it a considerable number of large, well-built houses, in good repair."

† About eight miles from Morristown is the house where General [Charles] Lee was taken. I went up and viewed it."

seven companies getting in before night. The other three companies arrived the next day. Quartermaster Staits led us to quarters; but the houses were so scattered that the regiment was, as usual, extended four miles; the company on the right (Captain Ward's) about eight miles from Brunswick, and five miles from the landing where the enemy lay. My quarters were at Leffert Sebrun's, a good old farmer, where I found great cleanliness, a good house, and hospitality. . . . Bound Brook is so called from its lying by a large brook which divides Somerset and Middlesex counties. Its proper name, I am told, is Bridgewater, and it contains, perhaps, eighty small dwelling-houses within the compass of a mile, intermixed with a few large ones, two stories high; but the buildings in general are much decayed, not more than one in ten being in tolerable order. The land is very level in the village, and for many miles eastward, southward, and westward, but yet well wooded. Southward of the village runs Raritan River, which goes down to Brunswick, and so to the sea. 'Tis fordable, as I am informed, almost anywhere, except in freshets. Northward of the village runs a mountain, covered with wood, that extends north-eastward a good way towards Quibbletown; and at the foot of this mountain runs Bound Brook. Its two branches, uniting near the village, empty themselves into Raritan River.

"Saturday, February 22d. — Rode with Brigadier-General Warner about a mile and a half down towards Brunswick, by the side of Raritan River; and, going to a little rising ground, I discovered the Hessian sentry. They keep their advanced guard about three miles from Bound Brook.

"Sunday, February 23d. — From eight in the morning to three in the afternoon, was travelling all over the village, with Colonel Sparhawk and Lieutenant-Colonel Carter, to see if their regiments could not be stowed closer, to make room for some companies of mine that were too far separated from the rest. We made way for three companies.

“Between six and seven, was sent for by General Lincoln. He, General Warner, and Colonels Sparhawk and Carter, were assembled. It was proposed to send one detachment of three hundred, to be covered and supported by another of three hundred, to surprise the Hessian guard. About eight, got the detail for my regiment. At ten, or soon after, the companies were assembled, and the detachments turned out and formed into four companies. They proceeded immediately after the detachments from the other regiments, and, having joined them, the whole marched, and, I am informed, arrived at the ground a little above the Hessian guard, about two o'clock in the morning. The sentries saw and fired at them; upon which the detachment ran on towards the guard-house, and, having come near it, received a volley from the guard. Our people returned the fire, and the guard fled. It seems they were but about thirty in number. Major Broughton went forward on the run alone a gunshot from the detachment, and took two wagon-horses with their tackling, and a Hessian, who was tackling them (it was afterwards found, by the prisoner's information) to carry off a field-piece. Another Hessian was taken, with nine cattle. The detachments immediately returned. The guide conducted the first detachment in such manner as to fall a full gunshot or more above the guard-house. He was to have led them below it; in which case, perhaps, the whole advanced guard might have been taken. But it was strong moonlight, though cloudy, and a body of men might have been seen at a considerable distance. This possibly might have defeated the plan, had the detachment been rightly conducted. It was owing to Major Broughton's uncommon (though, perhaps, in this case, imprudent) boldness, that anything was taken.

“Monday, February 24th. — A severe snow-storm; and I, being appointed field-officer of the day, was obliged to be out in the worst of it. At one o'clock next morning, set out, with Mr. Norris, to go the grand round, to visit

all the guards and sentries. It was five before we got to our quarters. For four hours we were wading about in the snow, a considerable part of the time almost up to our knees; and, as we had to cross fields, and get over fences, frequently above our knees. It ceased to snow between three and four o'clock in the morning of the 25th; so that it snowed near four and twenty hours fast, and more snow fell than had fallen at any one time during the winter.

"Tuesday, February 25th. — In the afternoon, as soon as I had received the reports of the captains of the several guards, I reported to the General what they reported, and what occurred to me respecting the guards and sentries in going the round. Some sentries were remiss, but generally [the sentries were] vigilant.

"Wednesday, February 26th. — Ascended the mountain back of my quarters. 'Tis pretty high, and, the country all round for many miles being level, you have an extensive prospect; and in summer it must be extremely beautiful. You will see, all round, the green fields and woods, waving grain, and winding glades and streams.

"Thursday, February 27th. — Rode with General Lincoln to view the grounds on the left of my regiment, to determine where the guards may be posted to most advantage.

"Friday, February 28th. — Went again to the mountain, and viewed the country round. Quibbletown was in full view at the east, distant about three miles; and we saw the steeple of Brunswick church above the tops of the trees. Some mountains eastward reared their heads. I am informed they lie near Newark, distant twenty miles. Between me and them the country appeared level; and on other quarters no mountain or considerable hills appeared but at a great distance.

"This day a flag came up from General Howe, directed thus, —

‘General Washington,
&c. &c.’

and marked, at the left corner, ‘W. Howe.’

“March 1st, Saturday. — Dr. Putnam, in the forenoon, brought me a billet, of which the following is a copy : —

“‘DEAR SIR,

“‘As our battalion is so unfortunate as not to have a doctor, and, in my opinion, dying for want of medicine, I beg that you will come down to-morrow morning, and visit the sick of my company. For that favor you shall have sufficient satisfaction from your humble servant,

“‘JAMES PIGOT,

“‘Captain of the Eighth Battalion of Pennsylvania.’

“‘QUIBBLETOWN, February 28th, 1777.’

“I desired the Doctor by all means to visit them, and administer such medicine as was needed, it being probable that the regimental box would more than last my regiment. The Doctor was very ready to go, and went. It seems that this battalion expected a physician to attend them ; but he stopped at a hospital to take care of the sick. They were raised about the Ohio, and had travelled near five hundred miles, as one of the soldiers (who came for the Doctor) informed me ; for about one hundred and sixty miles over the mountains, never entering a house, but at night building fires and encamping on the snow. Considerable numbers, unused to such hardships, have since died. The Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel are among the dead.

“The Doctor returned, and told me he found the battalion in cold, shattered houses, and very nasty, to which causes he partly now imputed their diseases. Both these causes it was greatly in their power to remove, the latter entirely ; but they had been careless. They importuned the Doctor to visit them again to-morrow.

“Sunday, March 2d. — Last evening received two letters, one from my brother, the other from my wife, giving me the agreeable tidings of the birth of a son, &c. Attended public worship at Bound Brook, where the minister of Woodbridge (who had fled and left all to the enemy) for

this time officiated, and preached a plain, good sermon, from Psalm xlv. 4."

Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife from Bound Brook, March 2d, 1777. Referring to his letter dated at North Castle, February 12th, he says,—

"I was then on my way to join General Washington, whom I expected to see at Morristown the Sunday following; but it was Wednesday before I reached the town; and, for want of room, and because some of my companies were a good way in the rear, the regiment did not get in till Thursday. It was owing chiefly to another regiment of militia, which, having orders to march from White Plains before us, and marching, in fact, two days before us (though one was stormy, and we both lay still), was yet always in our way, by their dilatory marches; and we could not pass them; for then, the houses being so scattered, my regiment could not have found cover. After advancing two different days, we were obliged to retire again to find quarters. . . . I am uncertain when we shall be discharged. I find the greater part of my regiment have set their faces eastward; so that, if General Washington desires us to stay till the first of April, I am afraid few will tarry. My endeavors, however, shall not be wanting to persuade them to stay."

Journal. — "Monday, March 3d. — At half after eight in the morning set off with General Lincoln for Morristown, where we arrived about one o'clock; but we were detained by the way on account of a letter delivered the General from General Washington, to send in to General Howe by a flag. I took this opportunity (the first that had presented) to write to Commissary Loring about Captain [Addison] Richardson and Lieutenant [Gibsons] Clough, of Colonel Hutchinson's regiment, prisoners taken at Fort Washington, to know if they were yet prisoners, that I might send in the parcels of money I had for them, and requested an immediate answer.

“On our arrival at Morristown we waited on General Washington. General Lincoln mentioned his business, respecting the pay and discharge of the Massachusetts militia. I presented the steel sword-hilt, which the General said he accepted as a singular mark of respect, and desired me to call upon him, on my return home, for a letter of compliments to the donors. Then General Lincoln and I retired; for the General was engaged in business. He first invited us to dine with him, which we did with a great deal of pleasure. A quarter after five we left the General's, and went about four miles, to General Moulton's quarters, on our way to Bound Brook. At a quarter past seven in the evening, General Lincoln and I proceeded for Bound Brook, where we arrived about eleven at night, having rode forty miles this day.

“Tuesday, March 4th. — A detachment of better than two hundred men (eighty from my regiment) went down towards the enemy, to cover a foraging party. They got forage and returned.

“Wednesday, March 5th. — Being field-officer of the day, set off to go the grand round twenty minutes after eleven at night, and was more than four hours in visiting all the guards and many of the sentries. The latter were all alert.

“Thursday, March 6th. — A general fast through the Jerseys, by order of Governor Livingston, pursuant to the recommendation of Congress.

“Friday, March 7th. — Received most urgent orders from the General to remove the sick, and the heavy and spare baggage of my regiment, a few miles, back of the mountains. Assembled my captains and consulted them. Captain Ward agreed to go early to-morrow morning to find houses for the reception of the sick and the baggage.

“Saturday, March 8th. — Another detachment sent to cover the foragers, part (about forty) from my regiment. They loaded their wagons and returned.

“Sunday, March 9th. — Attended public worship. The minister of Bound Brook preached from Judges v. 9. He

declared his approbation of the conduct of the Massachusetts troops stationed here, and applauded them in general for their orderly and peaceable behavior. His compliment more especially regarded the two regiments which were here two months, — Sparhawk's and Whitney's.

"Monday, March 10th, to Saturday, March 15th. — Nothing remarkable. On Saturday arrived Mr. Hiller and Mr. Page. The latter brought me a letter from my wife.

"Sunday, March 16th. — Afternoon, four o'clock, having completed the regimental pay abstract (which, with examining the muster-rolls of the companies, their abstracts, the wagoners' accounts, and giving them orders, had employed me the last half of the preceding week), and got the General's [Lincoln's] certificate to it, I set out for Morristown, and arrived at Brigadier Moulton's quarters (about four miles on this side of it) at half after six, taking the shortest route over Dead River. Lodged with the Brigadier.

"Monday, March 17th. — Went to Morristown, got my abstract examined by Mr. Palfrey, P. M. G. [Paymaster-General], and a warrant from General Washington for the money, by ten o'clock, which was immediately paid, to the amount of eighteen thousand forty-two dollars and a third. In the afternoon I returned to Bound Brook.

"Tuesday, March 18th. — A foraging party (one company detached from my regiment) went and got eight wagon-loads of hay and cornstalks at the same place where the Hessians took three loads the day before; which occasioned a skirmish each day. Yesterday one man was wounded near the knee, — a flesh wound; but the ball lodged, and was cut out by Dr. Putnam. This day two were wounded, one in the neck, the other in the knee; both the balls lodged, and were cut out. Major Broughton commanded the party. His horse received a ball just over the eye, which obliged the Major to dismount.

"Wednesday, March 19th, Thursday, March 20th. — Nothing remarkable.

"Friday, March 21st. — Two companies only of my regi-

ment remaining, and their time of service expiring to-morrow night, the General gave me leave to go to Morristown to-morrow, as I had business to transact there relative to the regiment, the Major remaining to command those companies.

“Saturday, March 22d. — Went to Morristown. Finished my business with the Paymaster, and drank tea at headquarters, General Washington and his lady being of the company, and then took leave of the General.

“Sunday, March 23d. — Not being able yesterday to see the Quartermaster-General, went to his office this morning, and did not finish business with him till about noon; when I immediately set off for home, and reached Pompton Plains about sunset or a little after, stopping at my old hospitable landlord's, Peter Van Ness, with whom I lodged on my march into the Jerseys. He lives back in a field about a quarter of a mile eastward from Pompton church, and twenty miles from Morristown.

“Monday, March 24th. — Having been unwell near a week, and weary with yesterday's march, I did not rise so early as I intended, and so did not get away from Van Ness's till about half after six. I then marched on to Pond church (a hexagon, one story high, of stone), about six miles, and then about seven miles to a mill; just before I came to which, Mr. Rapalya, the son, of Long Island, now resident in the Jerseys, overtook me, and, after some conversation, strongly importuned me to get a horse to carry me to the river. I complied, and, by this mill, engaged a man to carry me forward. We rode three or four miles, and stopped at Sovereign's [Suffern's] tavern. Here we were confirmed in our intention of going to New Windsor, to cross the North River there, the enemy's ships blocking up King's Ferry. So we mounted again, and soon entered what is called Smith's Clove, which is a rough, narrow valley (*clove*, in Dutch, signifies *valley*), of near twenty miles in length, between rocky mountains, some of which present the most hideous precipices. Stopped, after riding

four miles, at Sloom's, and dined in company with Colonel ———, an acquaintance of Mr. Rapalya's, who last year commanded a New York battalion. Set off again, and reached, towards night, Smith's tavern, about fifteen miles from Sloom's. Here I was obliged to part with my horse, the man being unable to carry me any farther. Meeting here with John Smith (with whom I had spent an evening at Colonel Hay's), who, as well as Rapalya and I, was bound to Fishkill, I set forward in order to procure other horses, to accompany them, but did not succeed. However, whilst I was making inquiry, along came an honest Irishman, of Orange County, who had, last campaign, been in the service under Brigadier-General George Clinton, of that county, and, seeing me with the badge of a field-officer, and on foot, most kindly offered me his horse, and insisted upon my riding, saying it gave him pleasure whenever he could oblige a friend to liberty; that he had been a soldier himself, and I had much farther to walk than he. So he got off, and I mounted, and drove on with an easy pace, he walking nimbly and running in order to keep up; nor could I persuade him to ride till we had travelled about six miles, when we were within a mile of Paddy McDaniel's tavern, to which I walked, and there lodged.

"Tuesday, March 25th. — Set off a little before sunrise, and walked to New Windsor, about five miles, where I waited an hour and a half for the ferry-boat to come over from the Fishkill side; but we had a fair wind, and crossed over in twenty minutes, about two miles. Landed and walked up about four miles to the entrance of Fishkill town, where, meeting Bradley and Lancaster, two of my regiment wagoners, I paid them off. This detained me some time, so that it was past eleven o'clock before I proceeded on my journey. I walked about ten miles, and dined; then went on, and about three quarters after six reached Patterson's tavern, near Morrison's store, about twenty-four or twenty-five miles from Fishkill Landing. Here I lodged.

“Wednesday, March 26th. — About eight o’clock in the morning I set off for Danbury, in the route advised by Patterson, but found, on my arrival at Mr. McLean’s (which was at one o’clock), that it led me a length of sixteen or seventeen miles, instead of thirteen by the shortest road.

“Thursday, March 27th. — Tarried at Danbury, expecting Major Broughton and Dr. Putnam would arrive by night, with my great-coat, boots, &c., to enable me to ride home. After noon Brigadier Moulton came in, and told me the Major and Doctor had gone the other road home, by the way of Springfield.

“Friday, March 28th. — We set off from Danbury about half past nine in the morning, and reached Waterbury at night, — about thirty miles.

“Saturday, March 29th. — Arrived at Hartford about four in the afternoon, — thirty miles.

“Sunday, March 30th. — About nine, left Hartford and rode to Fellows’s, in Bolton, — fourteen miles; then to Knapp’s, in a corner of Willington, — thirteen miles; then ten miles to Kendall’s, in Ashford; all good houses; — in all, thirty-seven miles this day.

“Monday, March 31st. — Left Kendall’s about six in the morning (it was rainy), and rode to Woodstock to breakfast; then to Oxford, and oated; then to Sutton, and dined late at Elliot’s; then to Wood’s, in Westborough, and lodged; — forty miles.

“Tuesday, April 1st. — Rose at three quarters after four, and set off at six in the morning, and rode twelve miles, to a tavern in Framingham, where I breakfasted; thence to Mr. Dunbar’s, at Weston, — eight miles; thence to Medford, and then home, — thirty miles; — in all, fifty miles this day.”

Colonel Pickering’s reputation, and his recent visits at headquarters, made so favorable an impression, that, before he reached home, General Washington wrote a letter offering him the post of Adjutant-General,

which he declined at first, but afterward accepted. This subject occasioned the following correspondence : —

TO COLONEL PICKERING.

“ HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, March 30th, 1777.

“ SIR,

“ The office of Adjutant-General being vacant by the resignation of Colonel Reed, and the power of appointing a successor with me, I am induced, from the good opinion I entertain of your attachment to the interests of the United States, and your military character, not only to make a tender, but most heartily to wish your acceptance of it. It will give me much pleasure if the offer meets your concurrence ; and, if it should, I must request that you will delay no time in repairing to head-quarters, the arrangement of the new army and the good of the service requiring that the post should be immediately filled. The pay, I presume, you are acquainted with ; but, lest you should not be, I think proper to mention that it is a hundred and twenty-five dollars per month.

“ Should circumstances put it out of your power to accept it, — an event I hope not to happen, and which would give me concern, — you will be pleased to send the express with the enclosed letter to Colonel William Lee. Otherwise, you will retain, and return it to me upon your arrival, which I trust will be in a few days.

“ I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“ G.^o WASHINGTON.”

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

“ SALEM, April 9th, 1777.

“ SIR,

“ I esteem it a singular honor done me by your Excellency in offering me the post of Adjutant-General ; and it pains me sensibly that I am obliged to decline it. It is an

honor to which I did not aspire, because I did not account myself equal to the important business of the office. Your Excellency does not mistake my attachment to the interest of the United States. It is sincere and unalterable. But my military character, which you are pleased to mention as a motive to the appointment, is, in my own estimation, of no great account. I have, it is true, studied the rudiments of the military art, but have very small, or rather no, pretensions to capacity and skill in the important scenes of war, and much fear I should disappoint your Excellency's expectations concerning me.

"I have domestic reasons and private concerns which powerfully urge my staying at home; but these I should not mention, did they exist alone. But, besides the command of a regiment of militia on the sea-coast, I hold divers civil offices, which are sufficient to engage my constant attention: those of Judge of one of the maritime courts, Judge of the inferior Court of Common Pleas, acting Justice of the Peace, and Register of Deeds for the county of Essex. The exercise of these offices I could, without any very great inconvenience, quit for a season; and therefore, at the time of making the late levy of militia, as there appeared some backwardness in the people, I encouraged their engaging, and stepped forth and offered my own personal service.

"Nevertheless, I would for ever abandon all these employments, if I thought myself capable of doing more service to my country by acting in the office to which your Excellency has been pleased to invite me. But, as I do not thus think of myself, and conceive it not difficult to find a person not otherwise employed, and, to say the least, as able to discharge the duties of the office as I, I must beg leave to decline it.

"I am, with the greatest veneration,

"Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

"TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR."

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"SALEM, April 14th, 1777.

"SIR,

"I sent, by the express, an answer to your letter respecting the office of Adjutant-General, and gave what appeared to me sufficient reasons to excuse my declining to accept it; but I have since been uneasy lest you should deem them otherwise, and that I was too willing, under the civil offices I sustain, to shelter myself from the dangers and fatigues of war, — an opinion which, if it has taken place, I wish to remove.

"The case was this: I had concluded to accept the office, but, meeting with a number of unavoidable interruptions in the way of business, was unable to give my answer to the express till the evening, at eight o'clock, at which time I had directed him to call; and it was then, in fact, sealed up, and ready to be delivered, — the same which I now enclose to your Excellency. But, the express delaying his coming a full hour, I of course continued to revolve the matter in my mind, and, upon a review of the reasons on both sides of the question, those against my accepting the post, increased by the suggestions of my nearest friend, whose happiness and tranquillity of mind lay near my heart, preponderated, and occasioned the answer your Excellency has already received. Besides the reasons there given, others weighed with me, which I had not time to mention. The civil offices I sustain yield me an income that contents me, and, in a time of peace, would maintain my family. These I must have relinquished, without an expectation of reassuming them. Consequently, had I taken the post of Adjutant-General, and some cause had arisen (an event far from impossible) rendering it expedient for me to quit the camp, I should have returned divested of the principal means of supporting my family.

"Whenever I thought of a military employment, the condition of my eyes was no small discouragement to me. I am so near-sighted that I, although placed in the best situa-

tion, cannot, with any degree of accuracy, discern the position of a body of men beyond the size of a single regiment. It is true, in viewing distant objects, my spectacles help me to see nearly as well as people in general do with the naked eye; but they are frail things, and rain or snow beating against them (I found in the winter's campaign) so obstructs the vision as to render them almost useless. My business as Register of Deeds had, by my absence, got behindhand; it seemed to be daily increasing, and my office was not in such order as I wished to leave it in to a successor. These, with the reasons mentioned in my former letter, and many others of lesser moment, determined my answer in the negative. I regretted the proposal could not have been made me while at head-quarters, where I could have inquired particularly into the nature and extent of the office of Adjutant-General, and thence judged more certainly whether or not I was able to discharge the duties of it. The want of such information left doubts on my mind that were no small obstacle to my accepting it.

“On the other hand, I am sensible, that to support the army is of essential importance; that, on the failure of it, besides the general calamity of my country, every prospect of advantage or enjoyment to me must vanish. I have been, therefore, ever ready to serve the public to the utmost of my power. But perhaps the comforts of civil life, the love of ease, the enjoyment of my friends, and the powerful allurements springing from the nearest connection on earth, have led me to mistake the object. From a sacred regard, therefore, to the interests of my country; from the ardent desire I have to approve myself to your Excellency; from the pain it has given me to deny the request of the last of men to whom I would refuse anything, — I submit the whole matter to your Excellency's determination. If, upon a view of all circumstances, you judge it my duty to exchange the civil for a military life, I will do it. And then, should the office of Adjutant-General (for, from what conception I have of it, none would be more agreeable) be

once more vacant, or any other post or employment present, to which you shall deem me competent, I will not again confer with flesh and blood, but instantly obey your Excellency's commands.

"I beg your Excellency's pardon for imposing on your patience this second long letter. But I feared lest, by my backwardness, I might have offended. And I was led to make the above tender of my services because your Excellency's good opinion of me, and the urgency of your request, have raised me to some importance with myself.

"I am, with the highest veneration and esteem for your Excellency, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

"TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR."

To this letter General Washington replied : —

"HEAD-QUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, April 25th, 1777.

"SIR,

"I am favored with yours of the 9th and 14th instant. Upon the receipt of the first I had no hopes of seeing you in the department which I wished ; but by the latter I am pleased to find, that, upon a full reconsideration of the matter, you had determined to accept of the office of Adjutant-General, provided it had not been disposed of. I am obliged to you for the free manner in which you unbosom yourself to me, and must own that the inducements, both of a civil and domestic nature, which influenced you upon the first view, were weighty and hard to overcome. Colonel Lee came immediately here on the receipt of the letter which you forwarded to him, but expressed great diffidence of his ability to execute the proposed office, and candidly recommended you in preference to himself. As I can, therefore, yet confer the office upon you, without giving the least offence to Colonel Lee, I now confirm my first offer, and shall expect to see you wherever the head-quarters of the army may be, as soon as the situation of your private affairs will admit, which I hope will not be long, as I can assure

you your presence will be much wanted ; indeed, it is so much so at this time, that this important office is in a manner unexecuted. The reason of your hearing nothing of this matter when you were here was, that at that time it was expected and intended that General Gates was to re-assume the office of Adjutant-General ; but, his presence having been afterwards deemed by the Congress necessary to conduct the army at Ticonderoga, I was obliged to look round for some other, and you were recommended as the properest person for the purpose.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ G.^o WASHINGTON.”

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

“ BOSTON, May 7th, 1777.

“ SIR,

“ I had the honor to receive your Excellency's letter, by Colonel Lee, conferring upon me the office of Adjutant-General. And since, notwithstanding all my objections, 'tis your Excellency's pleasure, I am happy to declare my acceptance of it. At the same time, I am constrained, from my real feelings, again to express my fears that I shall fall short of your Excellency's expectations. Few people are competent judges of military abilities ; and most are apt to form their opinions very superficially. Hence I have as often been mortified as pleased by the favorable sentiments which some have expressed concerning me, conscious that many times I did not merit their applause. I know not who have recommended me to your Excellency ; I wish they may not have judged too favorably of my abilities. However, I am determined to exert myself to the utmost to serve your Excellency and my country ; and if, after all, I fail of executing the office with propriety, seeing I at first declined it, partly from an apprehension of inability, your Excellency will acquit me of presumption in accepting it at your repeated request. My affairs are complicated, but I will prepare to attend you with all possible despatch. Gen-

eral Glover accepts the post assigned him, and we shall doubtless go to head-quarters together.

“I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, JR.”

In reference to this appointment, General Washington wrote to the President of Congress : —

“MORRISTOWN, May 24th, 1777.

“SIR,

“I beg leave to inform Congress, that, immediately after the receipt of their resolve of the 26th of March, recommending the office of Adjutant-General to be filled by the appointment of a person of abilities and unsuspected attachment to our cause, I wrote to Colonel Timothy Pickering, of Salem, offering him the post in the first instance, and transmitting, at the same time, a letter for Colonel William Lee, whom Congress had been pleased to mention, to be delivered to him in case my offer could not be accepted. This conduct, in preference of Colonel Pickering, I was induced to adopt from the high character I had of him, both as a great military genius cultivated by an industrious attention to the study of war, and as a gentleman of liberal education, distinguished zeal, and great method and activity in business. This character of him I had from gentlemen of distinction and merit, and on whose judgment I could rely. When my letter reached Colonel Pickering, at first view he thought his situation in respect to public affairs would not permit him to accept the post. That for Colonel Lee he sent immediately to him, who, in consequence of it, repaired to head-quarters. By Colonel Lee I received a letter from Colonel Pickering, stating more particularly the causes, which prevented his accepting the office when it was offered, and assuring me that he would in a little time accommodate his affairs in such a manner as to come into any military post in which he might be serviceable and thought equal to.

“Here I am to mark with peculiar satisfaction, in justice

to Colonel Lee, who has deservedly acquired the reputation of a good officer, that he expressed a distrust of his abilities to fill the appointment intended for him; and, on hearing that Colonel Pickering would accept it, he not only offered, but wished, to relinquish his claim to it in favor of him, whom he declared he considered, from a very intimate and friendly acquaintance, as a first-rate military character, and that he knew no gentleman better, or so well, qualified for the post among us. Matters being thus circumstanced, and Colonel Lee pleased with the command he was in, I wrote to Colonel Pickering on his [Lee's] return, who accepted the office, and is daily expected. In this business, I beg Congress to be assured, though Colonel Lee was postponed in the first instance, their recommendation had its due weight; and that no motive, other than a regard to the service, induced me to prefer Colonel Pickering. His acknowledged abilities and equal zeal, without derogating from the merits of Colonel Lee, who holds a high place in my esteem, gave him a preference; and I flatter myself the cause will be promoted in his appointment, especially as we shall have two good officers in lieu of one, who, I am persuaded, will do honor to themselves in the line in which they move." *

* Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 432.

CHAPTER IX.

Colonel Pickering resigns his Civil Offices, and prepares to go to Head-quarters as Adjutant-General. — Movements of the British and American Armies. — Colonel Pickering's Injunctions to his Wife respecting their Son. — Outrages committed by British Troops. — Morgan's Riflemen. — Lord Stirling attacked. — The Abilities of Howe and Burgoyne compared. — Arrival of Lafayette. — Howe's Object the Capture of Philadelphia.

COLONEL PICKERING, having determined to accept the office of Adjutant-General, presented to the Council of Massachusetts Bay the following petition, which, with the proceedings thereon, though they may now be considered as rather amusing, and as making too much of an inconsiderable matter, were probably viewed at the time in a different light.* The fact, that the shops in so large a town as Salem could not furnish the materials for a set of shirts, is a serious indication how much the inhabitants of the State must have suffered from the scarcity of imported goods.

“To the Honorable the Council of the State of Massachusetts Bay, Timothy Pickering humbly sheweth, —

“That some time in March or April, 1776, two Continental soldiers of Colonel Little's regiment being found in Salem offering linen for sale, one of the Selectmen of that town,

* The state of feeling then existing in Salem may, in some degree, be inferred from a clause in an agreement, dated April 28th, 1777, for the occupation for one year of “the half house, garden, and appurtenances” where Colonel Pickering lived: — “Only, if the inhabitants of Salem are driven by the enemy from, or generally leave, the town, and said Pickering quits the said house, from that time the rent is to cease.”

suspecting the goods were stolen, gave information thereof to your petitioner, who issued a warrant, by virtue of which they were apprehended; and, upon examination, there being clear evidence of their guilt, your petitioner caused them to be committed to prison; but afterwards released them, at Colonel Little's request, to join their regiment then ordered to New York, he engaging to see them properly taken care of; that, about a year since, your petitioner caused all the goods found on them to be advertised in the Boston newspaper, but no owner appeared; and your petitioner having, at the request of his Excellency, General Washington, accepted a post in the Continental army, which he will join with all possible despatch, and the Honorable Daniel Hopkins, Esq., to whom the care of disposing of the stolen goods aforesaid was committed, being now under inoculation for the small-pox, your petitioner prays your Honors to empower the Honorable Mr. Derby, or some other gentleman in the town of Salem, to sell the goods aforesaid immediately (they having been advertised several weeks); and that your petitioner may be allowed to purchase two pieces of the linen (or enough to make him one dozen of shirts), as he knows not where else to procure it, and has no time to spare, his immediate attendance at head-quarters being pressed for by the General."

"In Council, May 6th, 1777. Read, and ordered that the prayer of said petition be granted, and that the Honorable Daniel Hopkins, Esq., be directed to empower Mr. Nathan Brown, keeper of the jail in the town of Salem, to deliver two pieces of linen to Colonel Timothy Pickering, he paying for the same at the rate fixed by a late Act of the General Court, first being appraised by the Honorable Richard Derby, Esq., or such others as he shall appoint.

"JOHN AVERY, *Deputy Secretary*."

In consequence of joining the army, Colonel Pickering was under the necessity of resigning his civil offices; but he hoped to be re-instated in them in case

he should survive the war. He therefore addressed the following letter to the freeholders of the county of Essex:—

“SALEM, May 31st, 1777.

“GENTLEMEN,

“Being appointed to a post in the army of the United States, I am obliged to quit the civil offices I hold in this State, and, among the rest, the Registry of Deeds for the county of Essex. My absence will probably be during the war. This renders it necessary that a Register be chosen in my stead; but, if I should survive the war, I shall return divested of all those employments which are absolutely necessary for the support of my family. For this reason, I am very desirous that my successor as Register of Deeds should be one to whom it would not be inconvenient to resign the office, if, on my return, I should need it for my maintenance. My brother John Pickering, Jr., is such an one; and I earnestly wish he may be elected. He has consented to take the office if the freeholders shall please to give him their votes. It would be improper in me, as a brother, even to hint at his qualifications; and it is unnecessary, as he has the happiness of being personally known by many of the gentlemen freeholders in each town in the county.”

His brother was chosen accordingly, and by successive elections he held the office until 1806.

Colonel Pickering left Salem on the 2d of June, and arrived at head-quarters, at Middlebrook, New Jersey, on the 17th. The next day his appointment as Adjutant-General was announced by a general order issued at head-quarters.

He wrote to Mrs. Pickering, on the 14th, from Peekskill, —

“I arrived here last night, and shall, as soon as possible, go on to head-quarters. From the authentic intelligence

received here, General Washington's army is not so strong as I wished, and supposed it was from accounts received at home. Howe doubtless intends a movement towards Philadelphia, and that very soon; and at present General Washington is not able to oppose his march. However, I hope the reënforcement going from hence, and that may come from the southward, with the addition of the Pennsylvania and Maryland militia (which I cannot but suppose must turn out on this pressing occasion), will enable General Washington to prevent the enemy's getting possession of Philadelphia.

"This, my dear, will doubtless be a warm campaign, and in it I may probably be frequently exposed to danger; but I hope God will preserve me, and at the same time enable me, in defiance of everything dangerous and difficult, to perform my duty. You remember who * congratulated me on the birth of a son, 'to transmit' (as he, with his usual gayety and romanticness, expressed it) 'my name and honors to future generations.' I am not so vain as to imagine my name will long survive my exit. Nevertheless, by God's favor, neither you nor your son shall ever blush that I was your husband and his father. I wish to live to make you happy, to educate our offspring, and to serve my country. But, whether living or dying, God's will be done. He orders every event in infinite wisdom, and it becomes his creatures cheerfully to acquiesce. One thing, my dearest, let me enjoin upon you; and, if I see you not again, regard it as my *dying speech*, — *Not to spoil our little son by too much fondness*. An only child, an only son, is oftener injured by the ill-judged indulgence than the severity of a parent. Let him be taught *obedience* and *modesty*, at the same time that he is treated with the *affection* which becomes a mother. If his life be spared, let him have the best education in your power; a liberal one, if you possess the means, and he should discover a capacity of receiving much benefit thereby, but not otherwise. For, my dear, I have seen at college

* Probably Dr. Joseph Orne, of Salem.

such miserable geniuses, that not all the powers of earth could ever make them scholars; and their parents made themselves and sons ridiculous by sending them thither. It were much better to instruct such children in merchandise, farming, or some mechanic art.

“I have written, my dear, as I have, because we know not the event of things future. But let it not grieve you. Remember, that I am still alive and in health; that we have a wise and prudent general; that in the most desperate engagements there are many chances in favor of life; and, above all, that the Lord of Hosts, in infinite wisdom, decides the fate of nations. And He, I trust, will save the American States from tyranny and oppression, and, as the means to effect that end, will crown our arms with wished-for success. We may probably suffer by our slackness in forming our army; but I doubt not we shall finally be victorious.”

The following extracts are taken from a brief journal kept by him, and from his letters. But of both he says, in a letter of October 22d, 1777, to his brother,—

“I write them in haste through necessity, and frequently so long after any event of importance, that I can write no news, unless by mentioning our affairs in more modest terms. Many writers, I find, exaggerate. I intended always to give the mere truth. But I have not been able to keep a regular journal. I am now a month behind, and more hurried than ever.”

Many of his most important letters on the events of the war were addressed to his brother-in-law, Mr. George Williams. Unfortunately, they have not been preserved.

Journal. — “Wednesday, June 18th, 1777. — A flag being to go to Brunswick, I sent by it a half Johannes and a guinea, to be delivered to Captain Addison Richardson, of

Salem, a prisoner taken at Fort Washington, and now supposed to be at Long Island.

"On the 17th, nine deserters arrived at head-quarters; three of them Germans from Rhode Island, two British grenadiers and two battalion men from Brunswick (one of the battalion men was a Courlander, and brought off his wife and child), and two of the new levies from Kingsbridge.

"On the 19th, three more deserters came in from Brunswick, one a British soldier, and two of the new levies.

"On the 18th, two lieutenants of grenadiers, taken by the Jersey militia, were brought to head-quarters, and twelve privates were taken the same day.

"On the 19th, General Howe decamped with the greatest precipitation from Millstone [New Jersey], and retired to Brunswick, his troops burning seven or eight houses on their way, and having plundered all the houses where they had been.* Extreme caution marked the whole of Howe's conduct. That part of his army which had advanced to Middle Bush and Millstone had no tents, but lodged in booths. They threw up eight or nine redoubts, but completed only one; three of them encompassed Howe's quarters. They began to retire to Brunswick about one in the morning, and the whole were in motion by eight o'clock. They left some pots, kettles, blankets, &c., behind them. When Howe first advanced, the Jersey militia turned out, and have acted with great spirit and bravery. This day, (June 19th), about two hundred of Colonel Morgan's riflemen were ambushed by about a hundred and fifty of the enemy, and received their whole fire; which, however, hurt not a single man. The riflemen returned the fire. The enemy fled, leaving eight men dead on the field.

"June 22d. — The rear-guard of General Howe's army left Brunswick in the morning. Several detachments were ordered to fall on their rear; but, having been before posted

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 469.

at considerable distances from head-quarters, and it being late the preceding night before the orders could be sent them, Howe was retiring before they united. Such detachments, however, as did arrive, followed him about four miles; but he was too strong to admit of a direct and close attack. He retired to Amboy.*

"It being reported, on good grounds, that the enemy were crossing over to Staten Island, the whole army were ordered to supply themselves with three days' provisions, and be ready to march the next morning.

"June 23d. — The rain this day prevented the march of the army; so they were to get ready to march to-morrow."

The same day he wrote to Mrs. Pickering: —

"HEAD-QUARTERS, MIDDLE BROOK, June 23d, 1777.

"I embrace the first opportunity since my arrival here to write you. I am very happy in the General's family. His secretaries and aides-de-camp are gentlemen of education, and of the most polite, obliging manners. Yesterday General Howe's army decamped, and, from the best accounts, are all retired to Amboy, from whence the passage to Staten Island is short and easy. What will be their next attempt is altogether uncertain; but I am inclined to think the game is nearly over with them. I believe as many as thirty deserters from the enemy have come in since my arrival here, which was on Tuesday, the 17th inst.

"In the execution of my office, I have received all necessary assistance from Colonel Connor, the late temporary Adjutant-General; and he has very obligingly offered me any further aid that I may need.

"If the enemy should continue the war, I am inclined to think it may be nearer my home; for surely they will not go far southward at this season. Nothing, I think, can they have in view but to distress us; conquest they must despair of. When I left home, I conjectured that one campaign

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 470.

after the present would end the war. I now believe this one year will finish it. The sooner the better, for the sake of the lives, health, and happiness of thousands. And then, also, shall I return to enjoy, with my Becky, all the sweets of domestic life; that quiet, ease, and heartfelt satisfaction which spring from the sincerest friendship and the tenderest love." . . .

With our knowledge of subsequent events, it seems extraordinary that Colonel Pickering should have entertained so sanguine an expectation of the speedy termination of the contest.

Journal. — "June 24th. — The army marched to Quibbletown, about five miles from its encampment, and halted; the intelligence respecting Howe's situation not being such as to warrant our proceeding to Amboy, where, in a plain country, he might attack with his whole force.*

"June 25th. — From the best information it appeared that nearly Howe's whole force was still at Amboy. Several detachments were yesterday and to-day sent down towards the enemy, and almost the whole body of light-horse, under Colonel Bland, who fell in with some of their advanced guards, and was fired upon.

"June 26th. — About seven in the morning a light-horseman brought word to the General, that the enemy were at hand, within two miles and a half. The General ordered the alarm-guns to be fired. The men ran briskly to arms. Next, a light-horseman of the enemy was brought in prisoner, taken by some of our light-horse, who also rescued three others of their brethren. This prisoner said he was taken not more than two and a half miles from head-quarters at Quibbletown. It was surprising to the General, that of so many parties he had ordered out to watch the enemy, none gave him earlier notice of the enemy's advancing. However, it afterwards appeared, that no considerable body of

* See Sparks's " Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 472.

the enemy were within several miles of Quibbletown at that time. One body of the enemy having marched towards our left, to attack and pursue Lord Stirling, who was pretty far advanced, General Washington ordered the troops at Quibbletown to retire to the mountains, and guard the passes to our old encampment; which was done accordingly.

“Lord Stirling, having with him only General Maxwell’s brigade, was attacked by superior numbers, and obliged to retire. Here three pieces of brass artillery (three three-pounders) fell into the enemy’s hands, but the ammunition wagons were saved. Lord Stirling retired to Scotch Plains. The enemy of that column advanced to Westfield. There were skirmishes between the enemy and other detachments of our army. What loss we sustained has not been ascertained yet, the returns not having been made. The loss of the enemy was considerable.

“June 27th, 28th. — The enemy returned again to Amboy, marking their way with the most wanton devastation, burning some houses and plundering others, breaking in pieces and destroying what was not portable. Places of public worship seem everywhere marked as objects of their fury and bigoted rage. At Westfield the meeting-house was converted into a slaughter-house, and the entrails of the cattle thrown into the pulpit.* . . .

“June 27th. — [Joseph] Millet arrived at head-quarters.”†

“July 2d. — General Howe’s army quitted the Jerseys, and went over to Staten Island, it being just that day twelve months, it is said, on which he landed there in 1776.‡

“July. — General Sullivan was ordered to march with

* See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. IV. p. 479.

† Upon the appointment of Colonel Pickering as Adjutant-General, Millet enlisted in the army for the purpose of attending on him as a servant. He is often mentioned in Colonel Pickering’s manuscripts.

‡ See “Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society” (for 1793), Vol. II. p. 67.

his division to Pompton,* and from thence, in a few days after, to the Clove."

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"MORRISTOWN, July 6th, 1777, Sunday.

". . . The enemy having entirely quitted Jersey, and the General suspecting they might go up the North River, the army moved up from Middle Brook, last Thursday, to this place, to be nearer to Peekskill. General Sullivan, with his division, is gone about twenty miles farther on, to a place called Pompton. What led the General the more to apprehend a movement up the North River was, that the enemy from Canada were about to attack Ticonderoga. We shall remain here till Howe makes some movement. If he goes up the river, we shall follow him. If he goes to Philadelphia (of which I think there is little danger), we shall go thither. But, if he stands off with his fleet to the open sea, we shall not know where he is going, and of course be in a great quandary which way to steer. Two sailors, by one of whom I send this, escaped from New York the day before yesterday. They say the talk there was, among some, that Howe was going to Boston, and, among others, that he was going to Philadelphia. We are greatly at a loss to determine what his intentions are; and, since he was disappointed in his plan of going to Philadelphia by land, we have sometimes suspected that Howe himself was at a loss which way to go. But, for my own part, if the enemy make a real attack on Ticonderoga, I shall wonder if Howe does not go up the North River. . . .

"P. S. I am so crowded with business, and as yet without an assistant, my friends must excuse me if I do not write to them. The General, a week ago, desired me to get a deputy; which I shall do as soon as I can light on a good one." . . .

Journal. — "July 11th. — The whole army marched from Morristown to Pompton Plains, about seventeen miles.

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 483.

Just at night, received a letter from General Schuyler, informing that General St. Clair and his whole army had evacuated Ticonderoga last Sunday, the 6th instant, leaving every kind of stores behind them.*

"It began to rain before dark. All the brigades had not finished pitching their tents.

"July 12th. — A rainy day. 13th, the same. 14th, marched to Van Aulen's, a mile east of Pond church; 15th, to Sovereign's [Suffren's or Suffern's] tavern, near the entrance of Smith's Clove.

"Sunday, July 20th. — Went from Suffern's tavern into the Clove, eleven miles. Head-quarters at Galloway's, an old log house. The General lodged in a bed, and his family on the floor about him. We had plenty of. seapawn and milk, and all were contented.

"July 23d. — Returned from the Clove to Ramapo. 25th, marched to Pompton; 26th, to Morristown; 27th, to Reading, eighteen miles from Coryell's Ferry over the Delaware. 28th, marched to the ferry, and quartered at a hearty old Quaker's named Oakham."

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"MORRISTOWN, July 26th, 1777, 10 o'clock, evening.

"After the enemy left the Jerseys, we had reason to apprehend they intended to go to the eastward, or up the North River. This induced us to march from Middle Brook to Morristown, thence to Pompton, thence within eighteen miles of King's Ferry, and thence into Smith's Clove, in a route that would carry us to New Windsor, where we should have crossed the ferry to Fishkill. But, having advanced a dozen miles into the Clove, we halted, having reason to doubt, from the enemy's movements and the best intelligence we could obtain, whether they were bound up the North River or to the eastward, or not. At length we had such intelligence as induced the general officers to think

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IV. pp. 485, 488.

Howe intended for Philadelphia. This intelligence was strengthened by a letter, written with Howe's own hand, to General Burgoyne, in which he says he is going to Boston.* But he sent it out by a man who had been confined by him in the provost three weeks, and on whom he had no reason to rely. In short, it was not doubted but he sent it on purpose by such a messenger, that it might fall into our hands. The messenger, at the first guard of ours he met, delivered it up to the officer, and gave what other information he could. We had, before the receipt of Howe's letter, come back out of the Clove. We are now got back to Morristown, and shall proceed on towards Philadelphia; for the bulk of the enemy's ships have sailed from New York, and, it is supposed, for Philadelphia."

Journal. — "July 31st. — We marched for Philadelphia, where the General, his aids, &c., arrived about ten in the evening, leaving the army behind. In the morning, about half past nine, an express came that two hundred and twenty-eight of the enemy's ships were at the mouth of the Delaware, which occasioned the army to move thither."

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"PHILADELPHIA, August 1st, 1777.

"On the 28th of July we arrived on the banks of the River Delaware, at Coryell's Ferry, about thirty-two miles from Philadelphia by land, and there we halted. Last night the General and his family arrived here. Yesterday morning, about half after nine o'clock, an express came to the General to inform him of the arrival of the enemy's fleet at the Capes of the river. Orders were immediately issued for all the troops upon the river (being eight brigades) to cross with all despatch possible; two more brigades at Morristown, under General Sullivan, and two more from Peekskill, are to follow as expeditiously as they can. All, we

* See the letter in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. V. p. 5.

trust, will arrive before the enemy can take any decisive measures. The militia from this State, Jersey, and Maryland will, no doubt, turn out with spirit.* The people of the city seem to be quite at ease, and not by any means to dread the enemy's approach. Fighting there must be, no doubt. God grant we may give them an overthrow, which, if general, must probably decide the contest. The army is in high spirits, and the order to march this way gave universal joy. The General and all the principal officers much prefer the enemy's coming here to their going up the North River, or to New England. For to this place the army will have but little way to march; and, as it is an event long expected, it is presumed the people are better prepared to give the enemy a proper reception. However, if they should even gain this city, the cause will not be given up as lost; the enemy will, I trust, have a great deal more work to do before they conquer America. Though we have met with many losses, yet even now the inhabitants of America seem not to be actuated by a becoming ardor. Greater sufferings will show us the necessity of more universally spirited exertions; and, when they take place, we shall undoubtedly, under Providence, prevail over our enemies. 'Tis now past noon, and I have heard nothing more of the enemy's fleet, except a slight report that they were still at the Capes, which, I am inclined to think, is true; for, if they had made any considerable progress, we should doubtless have heard of it. So much for news." . . .

Journal. — "August 1st. — The army arrived at its encamping ground between Germantown and Schuylkill River.

"August 2d (Saturday). — Dined with Mr. Goodhue, and sent letters home to my wife.

"August 3d to 7th. — Nothing remarkable. The fleet that had been seen at the Capes disappeared the 31st of July at night."

* This prediction was not verified. See the letter of September 25th to John Pickering, *post*, p. 164.

In a letter dated Philadelphia, August 2d, to his wife, Colonel Pickering mentions that, to the surprise of everybody, Howe, with all his fleet, left the Delaware on the 31st of July, standing off to sea in a south-east course; and he criticizes a conjecture that his plan was to draw our army from the North River, in order that he might go up, possess himself of Peekskill and other Highlands, effect a junction with Burgoyne, and so cut off the communication between the Northern and Southern States. The letter then proceeds:—

“Howe’s conduct appears to every one to be strongly marked with want of judgment. Indeed, it was long since thought that he possessed very moderate abilities; for which reason ’tis wished by all, that he may live long to head the British armies. Burgoyne is supposed to have ability, but to be too sanguine and precipitate, and puffed up with vanity; which failings, we hope, may lead him into traps that may undo him. But, whatever Howe and Burgoyne may attempt, nothing is to be despaired of. We have yet ample resources, and only want a sufficient spirit to apply them; which, I trust in God, we shall do when driven by necessity. . . . I expect we shall soon be on the march eastward again, in this uncomfortable month of August. Till yesterday we have hardly felt too much warmth. Should Howe proceed southward (which the most judicious will not believe is his intention), the climate will be sufficient to ruin him, without an army to oppose him. But, wherever he goes, and whatever he does, I hope he will allow me time next winter to return and see my friends.”

Journal. — “August 8th. — The army was reviewed, and in the afternoon marched about nine or ten miles back from Germantown. But it was a hot day; the troops fatigued by being under arms from six o’clock in the morning till one or two in the afternoon; and the march afterwards hurt many of them, especially as some did not arrive at their

ground till late in the evening. But the General did not intend they should have moved so far by four or five miles. The Deputy Quartermaster-General miscalculated the distance; and, besides, did not take the route which led most directly to Coryell's Ferry, so that the army marched, this and the following day but one, five or six miles for nothing. Some of the enemy's fleet seen off Sinepuxent.

"August 10th. — The troops came to ground near Ne-shaminy, or Cross Roads, about twenty miles from Philadelphia.

"August 14th. — The army still on the same ground. These fourteen days in August have all been uniformly and intensely hot. Such continual melting-hot weather is unknown in New England. We, in that space of time, had frequent showers of rain, and this day some severe thunder. . . .

"August 15th. — The most comfortable day in August hitherto."

TO MRS. PICKERING.

"August 20th.

"There has been an addition to the General's family lately — the Marquis Lafayette, of one of the first families in France, a young gentleman of modest manners. Possessed of an immense fortune, a country in peace, and a wife, he left France to acquire military glory in America. He has been honored by Congress with the rank of Major-General." * . . .

Journal. — "August 21st. — The army ordered to march to-morrow. Letter informing that the enemy's fleet (one hundred sail) were seen standing in between the Capes of Virginia. The order for marching countermanded.

"August 22d. — The army ordered to march northward. Countermanded, the news of the enemy's fleet being seen

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. V. pp. 10, 35, 36 and note; 128, 170, 172 (note), 454.

in Chesapeake Bay having been confirmed. Afterwards the army ordered to march towards Philadelphia.

“August 23d. — The army marched to within about five miles of the city.

“August 24th (Sunday). — The army marched through the city, and was allowed to make a fine appearance, the order of marching being extremely well preserved. We advanced to Derby.

“August 25th. — The army marched through Chester to Naaman’s Creek, the General and family advancing to Wilmington (a pretty town and pleasantly situated). This day the enemy landed about [six] miles below the head of Elk River.

“August 26th. — The General went with all the horse, save Sheldon’s, to reconnoitre.

“August 27th. — Captain Hopkins (of Moylan’s regiment) took a midshipman and five seamen, near the enemy’s quarters.

“August 28th. — The above six, and two more prisoners of war, and six German deserters, brought to Wilmington.

“August 29th. — Twenty-three soldiers, taken yesterday from the enemy, brought in prisoners.” . . .

TO MRS. PICKERING.

“WILMINGTON, August 29th, 1777.

“ . . . I only add here, that we are about twenty miles from the enemy. Their design is to get to Philadelphia, distant from them about fifty miles, and from us about twenty-seven; and ’tis *our* design and duty to prevent them. Fighting will ensue, most probably. I think Howe cannot retreat with honor till he attempts to go on to Philadelphia; and that object is too important for us to abandon without the most vigorous opposition. . . . Our troops are in good spirits. We have a respectable army of Continental troops, and we shall be aided by great numbers of militia; so that, in human probability, we shall vanquish our foes. We are

doubtless a wicked generation, and our army too much abounds in profaneness and debauchery; nevertheless, our enemies do not fall behind us in vice, but rather, I believe, exceed us, and have besides none but the worst motives — the motives of tyrants — to steel their hearts against us; whereas we have a just cause, on which the happiness, not of innocent Americans only, but of the thousands of poor, oppressed people in every kingdom in Europe, depends, to point our weapons and brace our arms, to urge them against the mercenary foe. Such a cause Providence, I hope, will favor and succeed, and that I shall return according to your wishes; or, if not ‘crowned with the laurels of victory,’ as you express it, at least without disgrace. I mean to do my duty, and pray God to inspire me with all that fortitude which my station demands. The hearts of all men are in his hands, and he can turn them as he will. Having never been in action, I know not what would be my feelings; but I trust in God I shall not disgrace myself, nor dishonor you.” . . .

Journal. — “August 30th. — Twenty-five soldiers of the enemy brought in prisoners. Two deserters besides.

“August 31st. — Two grenadiers brought in prisoners, and three deserters, besides five sailors.

“September 1st. — Seven prisoners and one deserter brought in.

“September 2d. — One prisoner. He was pulling potatoes; the owner came behind him, knocked him on the head with a hoe, and took him prisoner. He was a little Hessian. . . .

“September 3d. — Three Hessian prisoners brought in, and three deserters.

“September 4th, 5th. — Still at Wilmington. 6th, marched to Newport, three or four miles beyond Wilmington.

CHAPTER X.

Battle of the Brandywine. — Report of it to Congress. — Skirmish on the 16th of September. — Night Attack on General Wayne. — Garrison of Fort Mifflin. — Want of Zeal in Pennsylvania. — Militia of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New England. — Conduct of some Inhabitants of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

THE following extracts from Colonel Pickering's journal contain memoranda of proceedings of the American and British armies, including the battle of the Brandywine and a later skirmish on the 16th of September; and they set forth the lessons suggested to him by those actions.

Journal. — "September 9th. — Left Newport in the morning before daylight, and marched to Chad's Ford; crossed it, and encamped on the east side of the Brandywine, having information that the enemy had marched far to the north of Newport.

"September 10th. — At Chad's Ford, — hearing the enemy appeared, by their route, designing to cross the Brandywine at that place.

"September 11th. — This morning a cannonade took place, the enemy having advanced to the heights opposite to those occupied by us, on the other side of the ford. A hot skirmish took place between our light troops, under Maxwell, and a party of Hessians, in which the latter were chiefly killed and wounded, not thirty running away, it being judged by Maxwell that three hundred of them were killed and wounded. The enemy made no attempt to cross at this place. The cannonade was mutual; theirs did us no

harm, save killing one man. The enemy remaining paraded on the distant heights, and continuing the cannonade, induced me to think they did not intend to cross at Chad's Ford, but only to amuse us while their main army crossed at some other place. The event proved the conjecture right. The enemy's main body crossed the Brandywine six or eight miles above, on our right. The General had intelligence of this by some messengers; but it was contradicted by others; and, the information remaining a long time surprisingly uncertain, it was late before a disposition was made to receive the enemy on that quarter. The consequence was, that the divisions first engaged, being too far distant to be supported by others, were repulsed; and this laid the foundation for a final defeat. Nevertheless, Weedon's brigade, which got up a little before night, fought bravely, and checked the pursuit of the enemy, and gave more time for the others to retreat. This engagement on the right began about half after three P. M., or four, and lasted till night. When the battle raged most on the right, and the Continental troops were all, save Wayne's division, drawn off to the right, the enemy opposite Chad's Ford began a most furious cannonade, which was as warmly returned from the park of artillery. But at length the enemy pushed over, and, after an obstinate engagement with our artillery and Wayne's division, the latter retreated. The whole army this night retired to Chester. It was fortunate for us that the night came on, for under its cover the fatigued, stragglers, and some wounded made their escape. General Armstrong's division of Pennsylvania militia, being stationed at a ford two miles below, were too far off to lend their aid; they retreated with the rest. Although we left the field, yet we had reason to think the enemy's loss greater than our own in killed and wounded.* The only field-officer

* General Greene estimated the loss of the Americans, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, at about twelve hundred; that of the British at nearly eight hundred. General Howe reported his loss at ninety killed, four hundred and

killed on our side was Major Bush, an amiable, good officer."

General Washington and his staff arrived at Chester late at night, and took up their quarters in a house in that town, all of them very tired. The General, however, said he must send to Congress a report of the engagement, and called upon his military secretary, Colonel Harrison, to prepare the despatch. Colonel Harrison desired to be excused, on account of fatigue, and requested Colonel Pickering to write it. Colonel Pickering retired to another room, made a draught, and handed it to Washington. The General, having read it, said it was very well, but that some words of encouragement should be inserted, as that he hoped to give a better account of the enemy another time. Mr. Sparks told me, that, in relating the circumstances to him, Colonel Pickering remarked, that this was a very proper and a very important suggestion. The letter was altered accordingly, and reads as follows,* the amendment being in *Italics*:—

eighty-eight wounded, and six missing; and the loss of the Americans at about three hundred killed, six hundred wounded, and four hundred prisoners. — Lossing's *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution*, Vol. II. p. 178, note 2; Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, Vol. I. p. 253; Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution*, Vol. II. p. 11; Bancroft's *History of the United States*, Vol. IX. p. 400.

Headley, in his "Life of Washington" (p. 258), quotes a very different statement, "found among the papers of General James Clinton," and labelled in his handwriting, — "*Taken from the enemy's ledgers, which fell into the hands of General Washington's army at the action of Germantown.*" According to this statement, the whole British force in the field numbered ten thousand two hundred and eighty men; Cornwallis's loss was one thousand and eighty-eight, killed and wounded; and Knyphausen's, eight hundred and ninety-eight; total, nineteen hundred and eighty-six. It is an interesting inquiry, If this account was authentic, why has it been neglected by historians? and what became of the ledgers? See APPENDIX, No. II. page 545.

* Copied from Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. V. p. 57.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

“CHESTER, twelve o'clock at night, 11th September, 1777.

“SIR,

“I am sorry to inform you that, in this day's engagement, we have been obliged to leave the enemy masters of the field. Unfortunately, the intelligence received, of the enemy's advancing up the Brandywine and crossing at a ford about six miles above us, was uncertain and contradictory, notwithstanding all my pains to get the best. This prevented me from making a disposition adequate to the force with which the enemy attacked us on our right; in consequence of which, the troops first engaged were obliged to retire before they could be reënforced. In the midst of the attack on the right, that body of the enemy which remained on the other side of Chad's Ford crossed it, and attacked the division there under the command of General Wayne, and the light troops under General Maxwell, who, after a severe conflict, also retired. The militia under the command of General Armstrong, being posted at a ford about two miles below Chad's, had no opportunity of engaging.

“But, though we fought under many disadvantages, and were, from the causes above mentioned, obliged to retire, yet our loss of men is not, I am persuaded, very considerable; I believe much less than the enemy's.* We have also lost seven or eight pieces of cannon, according to the best information I can at present obtain. The baggage, having been previously moved off, is all secure, saving the men's blankets, which being at their backs, many of them doubtless are lost. I have directed all the troops to assemble behind Chester, where they are now arranging for this night. *Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits; and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained.* The Marquis de Lafayette was wounded in the leg, and General Woodford in the hand; divers other officers were wounded,

* See page 155, note.

and some slain; but the numbers of either cannot now be ascertained.

“I have the honor to be,” &c.,

“G^o WASHINGTON.

“P. S. It has not been in my power to send you earlier intelligence, the present being the first leisure moment I have had since the action.”

Journal. — “September 12th. — This day the army marched to the Schuylkill, part crossing and marching to our old camp by Schuylkill Falls. The enemy lay still near the field of battle.

“September 13th. — The rest of the army crossed, and the whole collected at the old encampment, vast numbers of stragglers coming in.

“September 14th. — The army, having yesterday cleaned their arms, and received ammunition to complete forty rounds a man, this day marched up a few miles and recrossed the Schuylkill at Levering’s Ford,* the water being nearly up to the waist. We lost here much time, by reason of the men’s stripping off their stockings and shoes, and some of them their breeches. It was a pleasant day, and, had the men marched directly over by platoons without stripping, no harm could have ensued; their clothes would have dried by night on their march, and the bottom would not have hurt their feet. The officers, too, discovered a delicacy quite unbecoming soldiers; quitting their platoons, and some getting horses of their acquaintances to ride over, and others getting over in a canoe. They would have better done their duty, had they kept to their platoons and led in

* In a letter of February 14th, 1827, to Chief Justice^{*} Marshall, Colonel Pickering says the army recrossed the Schuylkill at *Matson’s* Ford. “The water appeared to be two feet deep, and the current so swift, that the men of each platoon locked their arms, the better to resist its force.” A map by John Hills, published at Philadelphia in 1800, exhibiting “the operations of the British army from their landing at Elk River in 1777,” &c., puts Levering’s *Mills* on the Wissihickon, which creek the army crossed. A place near these mills may have been called Levering’s Ford.

their men. We advanced about five or six miles that night. Before this day's march, the General ordered all heavy baggage to be separated and sent away, directing the officers and men to retain only what was absolutely necessary. This order was, I believe, complied with very punctually, all expecting we should soon attack the enemy, when our baggage would be an unwieldy encumbrance.

"September 15th. — We advanced to the Warren tavern.

"September 16th. — About nine in the morning we were informed that the enemy were advancing towards us. The troops got under arms, and the baggage was sent off. An advanced party of the enemy attacked our picket, just posted (about three hundred strong), who shamefully fled at the first fire. About this time it began to rain. General Scott, with his brigade, was ordered to advance to attack this party of the enemy, or skirmish with another expected in our front. The rain increased. It was now discovered that the ground on which the army was drawn up for battle, particularly the ground where the park of artillery was posted, was not well chosen, as not admitting a chance of saving the cannon, should there be a necessity of retreating. So, after some hesitation, the orders were given to retire to better ground in our rear. Whilst this was performing, the rain poured down vehemently; and, by the time the whole had gained their new ground, the arms were absolutely unfit for action. After remaining here a little while, orders were given to march to the Yellow Springs, there being no prospect of the rain's ceasing, and our ammunition being in danger of spoiling, which happening, we should have been in a manner defenceless, if the enemy approached us next day. This was the reason, I presume, for the tedious march this night in the rain to Yellow Springs, a distance of [ten] miles. It was eight or nine o'clock before even the horse arrived there.* The brooks were swollen with the heavy rain, and Pickering's Creek up to the horses'

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. I. p. 251; Vol. V. p. 66, map.

bellies, so that the passage of the artillery and wagons was difficult. The foot passed over, in a single file, on a log laid across as a bridge for foot passengers. To add to the difficulties, the night was dark. The wagons, with the tents, &c., had gone another road, so that even the next day and following night the troops received no benefit from them, a few excepted. However, they made fires in the wood, and the next day looked tolerably comfortable.

“The proceedings of the battle of Brandywine and this day (September 16th) suggested to me two or three important lessons : —

“1. To reconnoitre thoroughly the post you take, observing its avenues, and what ways for retreating ; whether the ground be the most advantageous, or better be at hand ; and for every general officer, at least, to be perfectly acquainted (if the time admits) with every hill and vale you occupy, and for several miles round, — with every place, indeed, by which the enemy can approach you. This ought to be the first point attended to in taking a post. Before the battle of Brandywine, we had time to have viewed all the ground several miles on our right, but did not do it. So we had September 16th.

“2. 'Tis of very great importance to have correct maps of the country which is the seat of war.

“3. You should have guides perfectly acquainted with every road. These men should be timely procured beforehand, and not be sought for just at the critical moment when you want them.

“4. The great destruction of ammunition by the battle and heavy rain the 16th, shows the necessity of having very large stocks ready made up ; otherwise you become defenceless, or are rendered incapable of any enterprise for a long time. This very circumstance obliged us to keep aloof from the enemy, after the rain of the 16th, for a considerable time, not being able fully to supply the men with a complement of cartridges till they had made some up themselves.

“5. It was a happy precaution, taken previous to the action

of the 11th, to pack up and load our baggage, by which means all was saved, and our retreat not obstructed; and, as the event of battle is at all times uncertain, 'tis a precaution that should generally be taken, when you have timely notice of an expected engagement. One circumstance, however, was unfortunate, — the men had their blankets at their backs, which encumbered them in action; and then, and in the retreat, they threw great numbers away. Some also, to add to their speed, threw away their muskets; the latter deserve severe punishment, and the former are not blameless.

“September 17th. — Part of the army marched to Reading Furnace, where they were joined by the rest the next day; from which time to the 22d we were marching the chief of our time, having within that space again crossed over the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford, and marched down to the Trap, where we halted a day or two, when, hearing the enemy were tending upwards on the western side of the river, we moved up on the other, till we arrived at our camp near Potsgrove. Here we lay till the 26th, on which day we marched downwards as far as Pennybacker's Mills. But before this, while we lay near Potsgrove, the enemy crossed over the Schuylkill, and marched towards Philadelphia; but it was two or three days after they crossed the river before they entered the city, which was fortunate for us, as it gave time to our people at Philadelphia to complete the movement of stores.”

In the following letter to his brother, Colonel Pickering relates some of the facts above stated, with further proceedings of the contending parties. He mentions a suggestion made by him, that the garrison in the fort below Philadelphia should be reënforced; compares the militia of New England with that of Pennsylvania and Delaware, and comments with severity on the lukewarmness of Pennsylvania in regard to the conflicts taking place within her own territory.

"CAMP NEAR POTSGROVE, thirty-four miles above Philadelphia,

"Near the River Schuylkill, September 25th, 1777.

. . . "Although our loss in the battle of Brandywine was not so great as the enemy's,* yet since then it has been much larger; I mean by straggling and desertions, which, I am satisfied, have reduced the army more than the bare action. After that battle we returned to within seven miles of Philadelphia, rested two nights, cleaned our arms, furnished each man with forty rounds of well-made cartridges, then recrossed the Schuylkill, and, after several marches, were one day overtaken by a most severe rain. The army had just been arrayed for battle, the enemy approaching. It was judged best to shift our ground for a position more advantageous. It began to rain; the enemy halted; we marched ten miles in a continual rain and bad roads; arrived late in the evening at Yellow Springs; men fatigued, arms wet, ammunition chiefly spoiled (perhaps three hundred thousand cartridges); no covering for the men (the tents having been sent off when the battle was expected); rain all night and part of next day; another march to Reading Furnace; then we returned, and again crossed the Schuylkill in order to obstruct the passage of the enemy, leaving one division, under General Wayne, behind, to hang upon their rear. The second or third night the enemy fell upon Wayne; they exchanged one fire, close; pushed bayonets; Wayne retired; the enemy did not pursue, but retired also. Next day Wayne buried fifty-six of his men, and the inhabitants said the enemy buried twenty-three of theirs, and carried off four or five wagon-loads.

"Information that the enemy were proceeding up the Schuylkill on the [west] side induced us to march up likewise on this side. We got above them, and then they crossed below us at Swedes' Ford. We wait for Wayne to join us, and McDougall with his brigade from Peekskill. We shall, I expect, unite to-morrow.

"Six o'clock P. M. I have just heard that the enemy have

* See page 155, and note.

dropped down to-day within twelve miles of Philadelphia. The city is open to them. The day before yesterday I proposed, in presence of General Washington, General Knox, &c., that at least one company of artillerymen and a sufficient number of musketeers should be sent down to garrison the fort below the city, which defends the chevaux-de-frise. His Excellency assented to the propriety of the measure; yet nothing was done. However, yesterday it was judged of the highest importance to garrison that fort. Accordingly, two hundred musketeers and two good artillery officers were despatched to cross the Delaware at Bristol. Had this step been taken when I proposed it, it might have been executed without a circuitous march to Bristol, for the enemy had not then crossed the Schuylkill. However, I trust it will still be effected with safety. If the fort is as tenable as represented, I presume the enemy will not speedily pass the chevaux-de-frise; and, if Howe is not aided by the fleet, he will not long possess Philadelphia, I am persuaded. But, from the account given by others, it seems that a height on the Jersey shore, a mile from the fort (which is near the opposite shore, back of which the large meadows are now laid under water), may be taken possession of by the enemy, from which, by their guns and mortars, they may prevent the galleys defending the chevaux-de-frise, and possibly make the fort too warm for our men. But surely the fort, at the distance of a mile, must be safe from everything but bombs, and I should not fear much from them alone.

“To-day it rains. To-morrow morning, at nine o’clock, we march and join McDougall. Pretty soon, I imagine, we shall proceed to attack the enemy, if their post be practicable. Were Howe, with his present force, in New England, and General Washington with so many Continental troops as he will have when joined by Wayne and McDougall, I should not wish for a better opportunity to crush him; for we should have there the best intelligence, and as many militia as we desired for a short, bold push; but here we

are, in fact, in an enemy's country. I am told upwards of sixty-five thousand men are enrolled in the militia of Pennsylvania; yet we have not two thousand in the field, and these are of little worth and constantly deserting. After the action of the 11th, and the enemy took possession of Wilmington, almost all the militia of Delaware State also, ran home. Some Maryland militia join us to-morrow, perhaps a thousand men. Many that marched from home have deserted. Other militia are coming from Virginia and Jersey, together with a stout and good State regiment from Virginia, the latter perhaps now at Lancaster. The Jersey militia have been at war a year, are embittered against the foe, and have constantly behaved well in Jersey. But before all the militia arrives, I presume we shall be engaged, lest the fleet should get to the city.

"I had heard at home of so much contempt and ridicule thrown by the southern gentlemen on the New England militia, that I expected something better here; but no militia can be more contemptible than those of Pennsylvania and Delaware; none can be spoken of more contemptuously than they are by their own countrymen. And how astonishing is it, that not a man is roused to action when the enemy is in the heart of the country, and within twelve miles of their grand capital, of so much importance to them and the Continent! How amazing, that Howe should march from the head of Elk to the Schuylkill, a space of sixty miles, without opposition from the people of the country, except a small band of militia just round Elk! Such events would not have happened in New England. I rejoice that I can call *that* my country. I think myself honored by it. I hope I shall not do anything to detract from the applauses justly its due.

"The inhabitants here have, of a long time, been the most abominable extortioners; and where Howe has passed they refuse to take paper money. The villains in Chester county (between the Schuylkill and the Brandywine) refuse even to supply our poor wounded men among them

with necessary provisions, without the *solid coin*; and our surgeons have been obliged to carry provisions to them from hence. I feel in some degree reconciled to Howe's entering Pennsylvania and Philadelphia, that the unworthy inhabitants (of which 'tis apparent a majority of the State is composed) may experience the calamities of war, which nothing but their own supineness and unfriendliness to the American cause would have brought on them. Possibly Heaven permits it in vengeance for their defection, that their country should be the seat of war. Not that I have a great opinion of the *morality* of the Americans in general; but there are surely none who have not more *public* virtue than the Pennsylvanians. However, did the event of the contest depend on the goodness, the *moral virtue*, of my countrymen, I should despair of success. But, for the *justice of our cause* and the sake of the *righteous* in the land, I hope, and I doubt not, God will in the end grant us victory, and a consequent happy peace. Yet perhaps many trials await us. All our afflictions have not taught us humility. Every species of vice has rather prevailed since the war began. In short, look where you will, there is so much evil, that a good man would scarcely wish to live, were it not for the pleasures he enjoys in the small circle of his nearest friends. I sometimes wonder we are so fond of life, when we almost daily meet with something to vex our souls. But, doubtless, Shakespeare has assigned the true reason, — an *uncertain futurity*. Yet this should affect none but infidels; and we have good advice, — 'Fret not because of evil men.' We must do our duty, and await our appointed time till our change comes, enjoying what bounties Heaven pleases to bestow.

"I wish to hear particularly of the state of my father, mother, and all my relations." . . .

CHAPTER XI.

Battle of Germantown. — Lessons suggested by it. — News of Burgoyne's Surrender.

THE subject of some further extracts from Colonel Pickering's journal and letters is the battle of Germantown. This contemporary account of that battle is not only interesting in itself, but important in its bearing on a controversy which arose many years afterward, on that subject, between William Johnson, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, on the one part, and Colonel Pickering and Mr. Sparks on the other.* Colonel Pickering seems to have forgotten that he held such a document; as otherwise he would probably have referred to it, as corroborating his statements founded upon his recollection at the time of the controversy.

Journal. — "September 29th. — We marched from Pennybacker's Mills down to Skippack, within about twenty-five miles of Philadelphia.

"October 2d. — The [army] marched about five miles farther down on the Skippack road to Worcester township.

"October 3d. — The troops were got ready for marching, it being intended to make an attack upon the enemy the next morning. In the evening, about eight o'clock, the troops were on the march, in the following disposition: General Sullivan, commanding the right wing, was to move

* See the "North American Review" for April, 1825, p. 381, and for October, 1826, p. 414; and the "National Intelligencer" of December 5th, 1826, January 27th, 1827, and February 24th (Supplement), 1827.

down, with his and Wayne's divisions, on the direct road to Germantown, preceded by Conway's brigade, which was to take off the enemy's picket, file off to the right, and fall upon the enemy's left flank and rear, while Sullivan's and Wayne's divisions attacked them in front. Maxwell's and the North Carolina brigades were to form a second line in rear of Sullivan and Wayne. General Greene, with the left wing, was to move down the North Wales road to attack the enemy's right, the front line of this wing being composed of Greene's and McDougall's divisions, and the second line, of Stephen's; while Smallwood, with his Maryland, and Forman, with his Jersey militia, were to attack them on their right flank and rear. At the same time General Armstrong, with his division of Pennsylvania militia, was to move down the old Egypt or Schuylkill road, and take off a Hessian picket posted there, and attack the enemy's left wing and rear. The attack was to begin upon every quarter at five in the morning.

"This disposition appears to have been well made; but to execute such a plan requires great exactness in the officers conducting the columns, as well as punctuality in commencing the march, to bring the whole to the point of action at once; and for this end it is absolutely necessary that the length and quality of the roads be perfectly ascertained, the time it will take to march them accurately calculated, and guides chosen who are perfectly acquainted with the roads. It is also necessary to assign proper halting-places, if either column would arrive before the appointed hour. All these points, I believe, were attended to in the present case; but yet I understood that the guide of the left wing mistook the way, so that, although the right wing halted a considerable time, yet it attacked first, though later than was intended; that halt being occasioned by information from a prisoner, that half a battalion of the enemy's light infantry had the preceding evening advanced on the same road a considerable way beyond their picket. It was necessary, therefore, to make a disposition to secure

that party of light infantry, that their opposition might not frustrate the principal design. Such a disposition was in fact made; but the enemy had retired about midnight to their camp.

“General Conway’s brigade formed the advanced guard, and in the morning, October 4th, attacked and drove the enemy’s picket at Beggarstown (which is the upper end of Germantown). The rest of the right wing followed to support Conway. In a little time the whole got engaged, save the North Carolina brigade, which was not brought on to the attack at all. The other brigades drove the enemy before them a mile or two to the very centre of Germantown. All this time we could not hear of the left wing’s being engaged, for the smoke and fog prevented our seeing them, and our own fire drowned theirs. (General Washington went with the right wing, attended by his aides-de-camp and myself.) But the left wing had engaged, and both wings met almost in the same point, which was at Mr. Chew’s house, into which the enemy had thrown a party (we since find them to have been six companies, with a Colonel to command them) that annoyed us prodigiously, and absolutely stopped our pursuit; — not necessarily, but we mistook our true interest; we ought to have pushed our advantage, leaving a party to watch the enemy in that house. But our stop here gave the enemy time to recollect themselves and get reënforced,* and eventually to oblige us to retreat; for this period was all suspense, and the brigades not well collected and formed in the mean time. Indeed, this would have been, perhaps, impracticable, for the troops were greatly broken and scattered, great numbers having left their corps to help off the wounded, others being broken by other means, or by carelessness; for officers and men got much separated from each other, neither (in numerous instances) knowing where to find their own.

“This house of Chew’s was a strong stone building, and

* Stedman says, that by the delay “time was afforded to the rest of the British line to get under arms.” — *History of the American War*, Vol. I. p. 399.

exceedingly commodious, having windows on every side, so that you could not approach it without being exposed to a severe fire; which, in fact, was well directed, and killed and wounded a great many of our officers and men. Several of our pieces, six-pounders, were brought up within musket-shot of it, and fired round balls at it, but in vain: the enemy, I imagine, were very little hurt; they still kept possession. It was proposed (for our advanced brigades had driven the enemy some way beyond it) to send a flag to summon the enemy posted there to surrender, it being urged as dangerous to leave them in our rear. A proposal was made to leave a party to watch them, and for the rest of the army to push on. But a flag was sent, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, Deputy Adjutant-General, offering himself to carry it. I did not expect to see him return alive. I imagined they would pay no respect to the flag, they being well posted, and the battle far enough from being decided. The event justified my apprehensions: in a few minutes Mr. Smith was brought back with his leg broken and shattered by a musket-ball fired from the house.

“During this time there was a cessation of firing; but soon the enemy advanced, and our troops gave way on all sides, and retired with precipitation. This retreat surprised every body (all supposing victory was nearly secured in our favor); but I think the facts before mentioned will tolerably well account for that event. Another circumstance also contributed to it: the foggy, still morning (the air moving very little, but what there was bringing the smoke and fog in our faces), and the body of smoke from the firing, absolutely prevented our seeing the enemy till they had advanced close upon us. This also prevented the two wings, and even the different brigades of the same wing, from seeing each other and coöperating in the best manner; nay, I am persuaded they sometimes fired on each other, particularly at Chew’s house, where the left wing supposed the cannon-balls fired by the right at the house came from the enemy. In a word, our disaster was imputed chiefly to the fog and the smoke,

which, from the stillness of the air, remained a long time, hanging low and undissipated. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered, that the fog blinded the enemy as well as ourselves, though it certainly injured us most.

“This battle taught me the absurdity of helping off wounded men during the heat of action. By doing it you save a few mangled bodies, but most probably lose a victory. By such numbers going off with the wounded, the ranks are thinned and broken, their arms dropped and lost, and few of them ever return to the charge. Indeed, it furnishes the timorous with an admirable pretext for deserting their duty. Frequently from two to five and six men were seen helping off one wounded man; whose death, too, from the badness of his wounds, was probably inevitable and not far off. By these losses, added to the killed and wounded, your ranks must be so broken and your strength so greatly reduced, that it can never be matter of surprise if victory declares against you. It ought, therefore, to be an established rule, that where a man falls, there he should lie, unless his own strength and the assistance of the drummers and fifers could remove him from the field. This maxim, to some, may appear destitute of humanity; but the contrary practice is certainly the greatest evil. Rout and ruin are the most probable consequences. Nor is there much tenderness in hoisting a man with a broken limb into a wagon, and then driving over rough ways, where every jar tortures his inmost soul; and, if no limb be broken, he will probably get off the ground alone. The only case which can warrant the bringing off wounded men during the action is when you maintain the fight retreating.

“Another capital defect, in many instances, in this action was, the separation of the officers and their men; by which means to rally and form them again, when broken, was a thing impracticable.

“The fences, in this action, were exceedingly troublesome. Germantown abounded with small enclosures, strongly fenced with rails. These, in some instances, were attempted

to be pulled down, and in others the troops mounted over them. If a fence is to be thrown down, the best way is for the whole rank to press it two or three times backwards and forwards, and then, seizing the under rails, to lift the posts out of the ground and throw the whole down together; but if the fence be strongly set, the best way is to get over it. Some, indeed, suggest it as better to make openings in it here and there, that the troops may march through in columns, and then form again in line; but I cannot agree with them. If a battalion or brigade marches up regularly to a fence, they may get over in a tenth part of the time that it would take them to go through in columns and form again, especially if the troops are not very expert at manœuvring. In such grounds the officers ought to be on foot, otherwise they will of necessity be separated from, and many times fall behind, their men.

“After the army were all retreating, I expected they would have returned to their last encampment, about twelve or thirteen miles from the enemy at Germantown; but the retreat was continued upwards of twenty miles; so that all those men, who retired so far, this day marched upwards of thirty miles without rest, besides being up all the preceding night without sleep. This step appeared to me not of such pressing necessity. It also gave the enemy an idea that we were greatly galled in the action, and thought it necessary to keep well out of their way. On the other hand, I own, had the enemy come out in full force the next day, and we had stayed at our former encampment, it might have put us to much trouble, and perhaps loss, unless we had of ourselves retired early in the morning; which we might have done, and by that means have collected our men with more ease, and saved them much of the preceding day's fatigue. Certain it is, that we were by no means in a situation to meet the enemy till after we had made up a new stock of cartridges. But, in actions well disputed, the victors are commonly too sore to push their advantages. The refreshing their men, serving them with ammunition, taking care

of and removing the wounded, and burying the dead, will usually find them employ at least for one day. But where the victors can possibly pursue immediately, 'tis their duty and interest to do it; for, if the body of the vanquished escape, great numbers of straggling, fatigued, and wounded men may be taken prisoners, with perhaps a part of the baggage.

“October 5th. — This day and the following the stragglers had generally joined the army over Perkiomen Creek. After remaining here a few days, the army removed to Towamensing township. This was on the 9th of October. On the 15th we marched down again to Worcester township, to the same encampment from whence we moved to the attack on the 4th instant.”

In a letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated “Camp at Towamensing, twenty-six miles above Philadelphia, October 13th, 1777, Monday evening, 10 o'clock,” he wrote: —

... “Just at the edge of the evening, Captain Randall, of the artillery, now a prisoner of war on parole, told me he was going home to Boston, and should take a pleasure in serving me, if I had any commands. I told him I should embrace his obliging offer and give him a letter. He goes to-morrow afternoon, and, as I know I shall not be able to spare a minute for myself to-morrow, I determined to write before I lay down on my straw. Now, you may perhaps regret that I have no better lodging; but make yourself easy. I never slept sounder, or was more refreshed with sleep, than on my bed of straw, wrapped up in my blanket. I wish every soldier was as happy. Many of them have neither blankets nor straw. They make up fires, indeed, which render their lodging tolerable. In the two general actions at Brandywine and Germantown, especially the former, the men lost a great number of blankets.

“I believe I have never given a particular account to you or Mr. Williams of the two actions above mentioned;

and I dare not undertake to do it now; for I should then scarcely get to bed till morning. Mr. Williams desired me to give him weekly the copy of my journal; but I have been so excessively hurried, that I could keep none.* Whenever we are not marching, I write incessantly from morning till night, and am now more driven than ever, because business has increased and I have no assistant, the Deputy Adjutant-General being wounded in the last action; and I fear he will lose his leg.† After he was appointed, I looked forward to the winter, and pleased myself with the expectation of leaving the business of my office with him while I made a visit to my friends; but now I cannot guess what I shall do as to the intended visit. Indeed, the great events of the war must first take place, before it can be determined whether or not I shall enjoy so great happiness.

“Not long since I pleased myself with the hope, that Howe and Burgoyne would both be crushed this campaign; but Clinton’s taking Fort Montgomery and Peekskill, and proceeding up the North River, may make such a diversion as to give Burgoyne effectual relief. The garrisons at that fort and at Peekskill were much too weak to support a pass so important. About two thousand men had been drawn from there lately to reënforce the army under General Washington. This reënforcement was absolutely necessary to enable him to cope with Howe: and, had those troops remained at Peekskill, Clinton probably would not have gone up thither, but have turned his arms southward, and come to the assistance of Howe. And, with regard to Howe,

* In the small book which I have called a Journal, many of the entries are very meagre, and Colonel Pickering’s letter to his brother (page 162), and the remark in the text, show that they were not all made daily as the occurrences took place, but some of them several days after, as leisure permitted.

† Lieutenant-Colonel Smith. He died of the wound on the 26th of October. Colonel Pickering, in a letter of November 2d to his wife, speaks of him as “a youth much to be lamented. He was active, sensible, and brave; of a manly and generous disposition.”

I am under no concern, provided we can keep the pass of the river, and prevent the ships coming up to the city; of doing which I think we have a reasonable prospect.

"As my friends may have but a faint idea of the pass and the obstructions of the river, I will give a rude sketch of them." * . . .

"There are five ranges of chevaux-de-frise, which the enemy must pass to get with their ships to the city. They have moved one single cheval-de-frise a little way (but not sufficiently to let them through) at Billingsport; and Commodore Hazlewood has an old ship ballasted ready to sink in its place, if they quite remove that cheval-de-frise. This Commodore commands our armed vessels in the river, and, I fancy, is a capable, brave man. Fort Mifflin is on a low island, called Mud Island, where we have a garrison of two hundred men, Continental troops. The enemy, a few days since, threw up in the night the redoubt (No. 2),† within a small distance of the fort; but next morning the Commodore sent in some of his galleys to the shallow water, which silenced the battery, and made fifty-six of the enemy who were at it prisoners, — one of them a lieutenant and one an ensign, — and would have taken twice the number, but a party of the enemy advancing from the house (No. 3)‡ back of them, and the fort beginning a fire at the enemy, half of the battery men ran off to their friends, who were advancing. Province Island is diked all round, and, by cutting the dike, I am informed, it may be overflowed at every tide. Why the dike had not been cut, I can't devise. I presume it is done now.

"Red Bank is a good eminence on the Jersey shore, at which we have about four hundred men, lately sent down. A good piece of work had (General Knox tells me) been

* Here, in the original letter, is the "rude sketch."

† So numbered on the "sketch"; in which this redoubt is placed on Province Island, on marshy ground, near the Delaware River.

‡ This house is represented on the "sketch" to be on a small rising ground on Province Island, back of the redoubt, and much farther from the river.

raised there before, to defend it against any attack by land; and the garrison are going on to complete the fortification. While we possess Red Bank and Fort Mifflin, our gondolas, galleys, and other armed vessels, can lie between them, and effectually prevent (I am assured by judicious men, and well acquainted with their situation) the enemy's getting up a single cheval-de-frise there, and without getting them up they cannot pass. And the Commodore says, in his letter received yesterday, that, only keep him supplied with ammunition, provisions, and men, and he fears not what the enemy can do in the river. And these supplies, I trust, it will not be impracticable to furnish him with. He speaks of men, because many have deserted him. Two captains and their whole crews left him, and I suppose have joined the enemy. But out of the Rhode Island regiments which are now arrived (two of them, I think, have gone to Red Bank for garrisoning the fort there), I should suppose a supply of seamen might be given him; and, in case of absolute need, the General would surely give orders for it.

“ With regard to the army, 'tis in good spirits, and reënforced, since the last action, by the arrival of some troops from Peekskill, and five regiments of militia from Virginia, and one regiment from Virginia well disciplined, being the State regiment. But Pennsylvania, from which we ought to have the largest reënforcements of militia, has now but about twelve hundred men in the field; whereas they should have as many thousand, if needed. Sure I am, that, were Boston situated exactly as Philadelphia is, and Howe in possession of it, twelve thousand of the militia would join us in a few days. Indeed, he could not have marched in New England with eight or nine thousand men through such a tract of country as that from the head of Elk to Philadelphia. General Washington's army, aided by the militia which would have flocked to him, would certainly have destroyed him utterly. But the government of this State has no vigor, the Constitution being generally disliked. And in this country, too, vast numbers are Quakers, and disaffected

to us ; and, although the Quakers profess a perfect neutrality, yet many — perhaps I may say most — of them manifested joy at Howe's coming, and afforded him every comfort in their power. However, many are sick of their bargain ; for, wherever the enemy went, they generally took all their horses that were good for anything. Howe, when he landed, promised protection to the peaceable. But, in his General Orders, issued soon after, he offers a reward of a guinea to those who would bring to the Quartermaster-General a good horse, and for others in proportion ; and less sums for oxen, cows, sheep, and swine, making no exception or distinction with regard to the persons from whom the horses and cattle should be taken. This I read myself in one of their orderly books which fell into our hands.

"Yesterday two or three German horsemen, and to-day four British light-horsemen, were taken by our parties, with their horses and equipments.

"In the late action General Agnew was killed, and we were told also, by divers persons, Sir William Erskine was badly wounded,* and General Grant, or Grey, mortally. But these horsemen acknowledge only that Agnew was killed, and the others not wounded. One of the German horsemen said General Knyphausen was wounded in the hand ; another, that he was not wounded at all. These horsemen say the enemy lost more in this action than in the battle of Brandywine ; and two or three persons, who came from the city soon after the action at Germantown on the 4th instant, make the enemy's loss very great, as much as sixteen hundred killed and wounded.

"Of our army, Brigadier-General Nash, of the North Carolina troops, was wounded in the thigh by a grape-shot or cannon-ball, of which he is since dead. Major Sherburne, of Portsmouth, aide-de-camp to General Sullivan, also soon died of his wound ; and a Major White (an American, married, I think, in England), who came over to

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. V. p. 82.

America to partake in its defence, has likewise died of his wound. A few days before the action, he was appointed volunteer aide-de-camp to General Sullivan. Divers of our field and other officers were taken prisoners, some of them being wounded and some not; and a number of our men fell, too, into the enemy's hands; which, in a retreat in haste, is an inevitable consequence. We were on the eve of, and expected, a glorious victory. Everybody was surprised at our troops giving way. We stopped to get possession of a paltry stone house, which the enemy occupied, and from which they annoyed us much. We ought to have passed it by (only leaving a party to watch it), and pushed after the enemy; but this halt gave them time to recollect and recover themselves, and then we were obliged to retreat in our turn, after we had driven them a mile. 'Tis half past eleven, and I must conclude this letter of *news*." . . .

In the following letter to his wife, dated "Camp at Whitpain, fifteen miles from Philadelphia, October 20th, 1777," Colonel Pickering gives an account of the proceedings in camp on the arrival of intelligence that Burgoyne had surrendered. He also remarks on the situation of General Howe's army in Philadelphia.

. . . "This prospect [of peace] is now nearer than ever. O, my dear, we cannot sufficiently admire that Providence which, from the supposed most dreadful calamity, has produced the greatest good to these States, and especially to those of New England. What evils were dreaded from the loss of Ticonderoga! But God meant it for good. We are saved, and our vain-boasting enemy he has delivered into our hands.

"Last Saturday, the 18th instant, we received by express the truly great and glorious news of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his whole army prisoners of war. In the afternoon, just before sunset, we fired thirteen pieces of cannon, and a rejoicing fire, to celebrate the victory.

“The following General Order was immediately issued upon receipt of the news:—

“‘The General has his happiness completed relative to the successes of the northern army. On the 14th instant, General Burgoyne and his whole army surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Let every face brighten, and every heart expand with grateful joy and praise to the Supreme Disposer of all events, who has granted us this signal success. The chaplains of the army are to prepare short discourses, suited to the occasion, to deliver to their several corps and brigades at five o’clock this afternoon.’

“But, in the interim, news arrived that the enemy were marching towards us, which occasioned a muster for another purpose, and prevented the chaplains’ making the intended preparations. However, the enemy pretty soon went back to their quarters, and gave us an opportunity of enjoying the victory.

“I wish everything here was in as prosperous a train as at the northward; but that will probably not be the case till we have more Continental troops, or Heaven shall inspire the inhabitants of this and the neighboring States with some portion of that zeal and animation which carried the New-Englanders to the field in multitudes, and which God has crowned with the most happy success.

“I believe I remarked in my last, that, while we kept the pass of the river by our forts and armed vessels, we had nothing to fear from Howe’s possessing the city. I am still of the same opinion; and we are still in possession of the pass of the river. But this day a party of Hessians crossed the Delaware to Jersey, probably with a design to attack our fort at Red Bank. But such reënforcements have been already sent as, I hope, will secure that as well as the other fort. This day we also have detached about two thousand men on a secret expedition. I hope it may produce some good effects; I think there is a fair prospect of it.* The

* The letter not being sent on the day of its date, Colonel Pickering inserted, “This detachment did not proceed, but are reënforced to-day (October 22d) with a thousand men, and will now go on.”

enemy at present have no communication with their shipping but by land carriage, over the Schuylkill, through Derby to Chester, off which their ships lie.

“Last Sunday the enemy entirely evacuated Germantown, and retired near to Philadelphia, encamping round about the city, within a circuit of a mile or a mile and a half from it; and, to secure this camp, they have thrown up a number of breastworks or redoubts. This will render an attack upon them difficult. But, if the militia would turn out with spirit, we might reduce them without fighting; I mean, by cutting off all supplies, either inducing them to abandon the city, and retire on board their ships with loss and disgrace, or, by hemming them in, obliging them to surrender. However, though considerable difficulties are in our way to conquest, I hope and trust in God they will be removed. Even in times far more distressing, He has appeared for us, and granted us prosperity beyond our most sanguine wishes; above all, in delivering Burgoyne and his army into our hands. This is not all. General Gates will, I suppose, be able to send or bring such reënforcements to this army as will enable us finally to overcome General Howe. But Gates and his troops are at a great distance, and it will be some time before we can receive his aid. Nevertheless, if Howe’s present vigorous attempts to reduce our forts on the river should fail, I am satisfied he will soon relinquish the city as a place incapable of being supported. Indeed, our information from the enemy is, that they place their eventual success on the coming up of their ships. They are greatly disappointed in finding the city empty of stores and provisions. Everything of importance was removed; and the inhabitants are already in a starving condition, there being very small supplies from the country, and in such a city but a few of the inhabitants lay in stocks of provisions, depending on the daily markets for their family supplies. We are assured both the enemy and the Tory inhabitants have longer faces than when the former first entered the city, beginning to despair of getting up the *chevaux-de-frise*.

They have been able to remove none yet, and have only canted two a little in the lower range." . . .

Journal. — "October 21st. — The army moved lower down to Whitpain township, within fifteen miles of Philadelphia. Head-quarters at Mr. Morris's.

"November 2d. — The army marched to Whitemarsh, about thirteen miles from Philadelphia. In all this period from the battle of Germantown on the 4th of October, nothing material happened in camp. Our scouting parties only brought in a few prisoners. But, on the 22d of October, about twelve hundred Hessians, led by Colonel Count Donop, attacked the fort at Red Bank, and were repulsed with the loss of about four hundred killed and wounded. Among the latter were Count Donop himself and his Brigade-Major, both of whom were made prisoners. Our loss in killed and wounded amounted to thirty-two only.

"The next day some of the enemy's ships passed the lower chevaux-de-frise, came up, and engaged our galleys; and, after a constant cannonade of several hours, the *Augusta*, of sixty-four guns, got on ground, took fire, and blew up. Another of the enemy's ships (since found to be the *Merlin*, of eighteen guns) ran aground, and, being hard pushed by our galleys, the crew set fire to her and left her. The crew of the *Augusta* also escaped (except the Chaplain, Second Lieutenant, and forty men, who were blown up and lost), leaving as soon as they found the fire inextinguishable. These instances of success and good fortune were pleasing, and gave great spirits to the garrisons of the forts and to our fleet.

"I forgot to mention, that, having on the 18th of October received the news of the surrender of General Burgoyne and his whole army to the army under General Gates, his Excellency ordered thirteen pieces of cannon to be discharged just before sundown, followed by a *feu de joie*. He also ordered divine service to be previously performed, expressive of our gratitude to Heaven for this signal favor;

but an alarm happened in the afternoon which prevented the chaplains getting prepared.

“Soon after the enemy arrived at Philadelphia they began to throw up some batteries on Province Island, from whence they cannonaded and bombarded Fort Mifflin divers times, but to very little purpose. Between the 20th and 30th of October we had several days’ heavy rain, which swelled the rivers to a higher pitch than had been known for thirty years. Province Island was laid under water, and the enemy’s guards waded up to their knees, and some to their waists, in water, to mount at their works. This same flood also carried away a bridge the enemy had thrown over the Schuylkill at the middle ferry.

“November 10th. — The enemy made a heavy cannonade and bombardment upon Fort Mifflin, and have continued the same daily on the 11th, 12th, and 13th, by which they have nearly ruined the defences of the fort.

“Within ten days past, sixteen of our light dragoons, under Captain Craig, fell in with a party of the enemy, consisting of seven light-dragoons and seven foot-soldiers, all armed, and took the whole prisoners, without firing a gun.

“A few days after, another party of our horse had a rencounter with a party of the enemy, when two were made prisoners on each side; but one of ours was a French gentleman, a volunteer in Colonel Sheldon’s regiment.

“November 16th. — The garrison evacuated Fort Mifflin, the defences the preceding days having been demolished, and the garrison greatly exposed to the enemy’s fire, particularly from a floating battery of theirs, mounting twenty twenty-four pounders, which lay so near, that the men in her tops (for she was an old East Indiaman — the *Empress of Russia* — cut down) could fire plump upon every man who showed his head above the ruins of the parapets, while they in the tops were surrounded with cotton-wool bags. ’Tis said the galleys in the river in general behaved badly, or they might have taken the floating battery, or obliged

her to fly.* The old garrison had defended it [the fort] with great bravery, and were worn down with fatigue, and, the day or two before the evacuation, had been relieved by the New England troops; but both the old and the new garrison behaved with great bravery.

“November 20th. — By two New-England sailors, who escaped from the enemy’s fleet, we are informed that about forty sail of vessels arrived from New York, four of them vessels of war, fifteen with light-horse, three or four with provisions, and the rest with troops on board.

“November 21st. — Early this morning (before day) there was a cannonade, which continued till eleven o’clock; supposed to be in the Delaware, near Red Bank.”

* See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. V. p. 151.

CHAPTER XII.

The Board of War newly arranged. — Colonel Pickering and Richard Peters elected Members. — Colonel Pickering's Delicacy towards the Assistant Adjutant-General. — Devastations by the British Troops. — Escape of American Officers, Prisoners of War. — British Treatment of Prisoners. — Accident to Colonel Pickering. — The Kindness of his Relatives. — His Plan of Living at York, Pennsylvania. — Colonel Scammell appointed Adjutant-General.

BEFORE the 17th of October, 1777, the Continental Board of War consisted of members of Congress. On that day the War Office was remodelled; and it was resolved, that three persons, not members of Congress, should constitute the Board. Their powers and duties, as enumerated in the resolve, were multifarious and highly important, corresponding in general to those of a Secretary of War; and other specific services (comprehended, in the resolve, under the terms "to execute all such matters as they shall be directed") were from time to time required of them.* General Thomas Mifflin, Colonel Robert H. Harrison, and Colonel Pickering were elected, on the 7th of November, the members of the new Board.† Colonel Pickering accepted the appointment; but his successor as Adjutant-General, Colonel Alexander Scammell, not being elected until the 5th of January, 1778,‡ he continued to per-

* Journals of Congress, October 17th, 1777.

† Ibid., November 7th.

‡ Ibid., January 5th, 1778.

form the duties of the office until the 13th of January. General Mifflin also accepted the appointment to the Board of War. Colonel Harrison declined it. On the 24th of November, 1777, it was resolved, that two additional commissioners should be appointed; and, on the 27th, General Horatio Gates, Colonel Joseph Trumbull, and Richard Peters, Esquire,* were elected. General Gates was appointed President of the Board.

On the 10th and 12th of January, 1778, Congress chose a committee, consisting partly of members of Congress and partly of members of the Board of War,—the latter being Generals Gates and Mifflin and Colonel Pickering,—to repair to General Washington's head-quarters, and to concert with him a reform in the arrangements of the army.† Colonel Pickering remained at camp, in order to meet the other members of the committee; but, on the 20th, it was resolved, that the members of the Board of War should be excused from attending on that business, and that General Mifflin, Colonel Pickering, and Colonel Trumbull should be directed to repair immediately to York, Pennsylvania, where Congress then held its sessions.‡ Before he left the camp, Colonel Pickering wrote many letters, extracts from which are given below.

The letter from Mrs. Pickering, to which the following is an answer, has not been preserved; but it must have told of her distress on account of the absence of her husband and his exposure to the dangers of battle.

* Subsequently Judge of the District Court of the United States for Pennsylvania.

† Journals, 10th and 12th of January, 1778.

‡ Ibid., 20th of January.

"CAMP AT WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP, November 4th, 1777.

"MY DEAR, MY AMIABLE BECKY,

"Although 'tis no more than forty-eight hours since I wrote you by Mr. Cary, yet yours of the 20th ultimo, this day received, excites anew my tenderest feelings, and compels me to begin again. . . . But, pleased as I am with this proof of your fond affection, I do not wish you to indulge such melancholy thoughts. I know 'tis difficult to control the mind. That little wanderer will often make excursions where wisdom would check its career, but strives in vain. However, 'tis commonly in our power to place other objects in view than those which lead to misery,—such as business, amusing books, and the society of friends. All these have a natural tendency to withdraw the mind from the pursuit of objects which give it pain. But, my dear, the Christian rests not here, but seeks and finds relief from other views. The Christian grieves not as those who have no hope beyond the grave, but looks forward to a glorious immortality, where grief and care shall have no place. Let this, my dearest, be our support. Often have I experienced its powerful aid, when surrounded with difficulties, dangers, and distress. Other props have failed, but never my hope in Heaven. This, raised and animated by prayer to the great Supreme, has often eased my burdened soul. Prayer is the natural mode of converse of man with his Maker; and highly should we prize the condescending grace which invites us to adopt it. Let gratitude warm our hearts for that and all other blessings, and let us never forfeit them by inattention or neglect. Let our confidence in God never fail or lessen; for that alone can support us under the severest trials. Let us reflect, at the same time, on our own ignorance and short-sightedness, which often lead us to view those events as most adverse and unfortunate which Heaven designs for our best good, if not in this world, at least in a better. To the Christian every event will prove a benefit: if it be happy, he will highly enjoy

it; if afflictive, it will brighten his virtues, and lead him forward to scenes of bliss without alloy.

“Reflections of this kind, my dear, are the suggestions of reason and Scripture. But, I confess, ’tis easier to preach than practise the lessons of wisdom. Notwithstanding the glories which, we believe, will in another world be displayed, great beyond the power of the human imagination to conceive, and although the path of life is strewn with cares, pains, and perplexities, still we are fond of living, — still content to postpone the enjoyment of exalted bliss beyond the grave. Whence arises this attachment to life, with all its miseries, especially when set in competition with perfect happiness? Is it because the first is present and certain, the other absent and unknown? With the infidel this may operate forcibly; but why should it strongly affect those who believe their peace is made with Heaven? Or, does it proceed from the corruption of human nature, — from perverse inclinations? This I cannot admit. A desire of life is the strongest of all our passions; and the Creator has, I believe, implanted none in vain. Even this fond love of life is necessary to man. Our existence is designed for the accomplishment of some noble ends, and ’tis usually lengthened to a certain period. Were we indifferent to life, few would live out half their days. Tortured with pain, or vexed with disappointment, most would cut the slender thread, and thwart the views of Providence. Hence, then, I conclude ’tis lawful to indulge this fond love of life, with all its reasonable enjoyments, — only remembering, that this world is not our abiding-place; that life, at longest, is but of short duration; and that we ought to conduct ourselves as heirs to a better inheritance.

“These reflections on human life need not lessen our happiness while here; at the same time, they may well serve to bear us up in adversity, and prevent our souls being weighed down with grief, even at the most distressing events. With this view only have I made them.

“November 13th, morning. . . . To my surprise (and

to yours it will be), the Congress, by a resolve passed the 7th instant, have chosen General Mifflin, Colonel Harrison (General Washington's Secretary), and myself to be a Board of War; and, for a variety of reasons (which I have not time now to mention), I have concluded to accept the commission. One reason, however, I will tell you: I thought it would give ease to your anxious heart, and relieve my friends, particularly my mother, from all distress about me. This Board, I take it, will reside where Congress does. The office is extensive and important, and therefore my acceptance is with diffidence. However, I am determined to spare no pains to comprehend and perform the duties of it. I ardently hope my associates will accept. General Mifflin is active, sensible, and of great knowledge in business, and my friend Colonel Harrison is one of the worthiest of the human race. The salary to each is, I understand, to be two thousand dollars a year. This is better than my present pay by one quarter. This, to a man without a fortune, deserves attention. Not that I am mercenary: everybody who has viewed my past life knows the contrary. But a wife and child strongly impress my mind with the importance of laying up something. And my views have extended farther. When the independency of America is established (as I trust it will be), a Board of War will most probably still exist. If, therefore, I find myself equal to the duties of it, and give satisfaction, I, by accepting now, may doubtless secure a permanent support; and this prospect, when I think of you and your dear babe, gives me no small joy. 'Tis possible the business of the department may call me eastward; if not, I imagine you will be less impatient to see me, as being removed from the military line. . . .

"Adieu, my dearest! Heaven guard you and your infant boy."

To Henry Laurens, President of Congress, he wrote:—

" CAMP AT WHITEMARSH, November 15th, 1777.

" SIR,

"I was honored with your favor of the 8th instant, enclosing a minute of Congress intimating my appointment to the Board of War. This mark of their confidence demands my sincere acknowledgments. I accept the commission; and, as speedily as the situation of my present affairs will admit, shall enter upon the execution of it.

"The business of the department I am not fully informed of, but conceive it to be very extensive, and of high importance. As such, I accept the office with diffidence. I am personally known to some gentlemen in Congress; I wish they may not have mistaken my abilities. Often an opinion has been formed of them, which, however flattering, was really a source of mortification to me, from a consciousness that they were rated too high. For nothing, therefore, can I engage, but my industry and fidelity; and, if application will enable me to comprehend and execute the duties of the office, Congress, I hope, will never have reason to regret the appointment with which they have been pleased to honor me. I am, Sir," &c.

To Mrs. Pickering he wrote : —

" HEAD-QUARTERS AT WHITEMARSH, November 18th, 1777.

. . . "Colonel Harrison yesterday went to Reading to see General Mifflin, being in some doubt whether to accept or not. I hope ardently that he will, because he is a sensible, a diligent, a most worthy, honest man, with whom I live in the greatest harmony, and whose inclinations correspond with mine. . . . I am aware of the vast importance of the office; and when the intention of Congress to appoint Colonel Harrison (the General's [Washington's] first Secretary) and me was first intimated to the General, I was surprised, deeming the office above my abilities and knowledge. But the General thought the Congress made a discreet choice, observing (to Mr. Harrison) that those who had been in the army could best judge of its wants, and,

having felt them, would of course most probably provide suitable supplies, so far as the means were in their power. I suppose the General's approbation was sent to Congress; for, in a few days after, the appointments were made. I wondered a little the General should be so ready to part with Colonel Harrison, because he was his acquaintance before the war, had been with him two years as Secretary, very diligent in business, and high in his estimation. Nothing but the greater public good could have induced him to part with Colonel Harrison.

“ With regard to myself, I think I can do as much public service in this new office as in that I now hold; and, at the same time, it will be attended with circumstances much more agreeable to me. My present business has been one continued course of attention and unremitting toil; for, of the five months I have been in the service, during one only have I had any assistance. I could have none while remaining in the General's family, because my deputy could not also be admitted. The General's family is large, and I cannot wonder that he was unwilling to increase it. I only wish he had sooner explained his mind. On the 1st of September I got a deputy [Lieutenant-Colonel Smith], and then first found that he could not make one of the family. This put me in a situation quite disagreeable, and I did not expect the deputy would have consented to serve; but he did; and, to render his situation as tolerable as possible, I went to board with him while at Wilmington, for I had quarters at a house close by head-quarters; but this lasted only a week, when the army marched. In two or three days, the General, observing my absence from table, sent one of his aids to tell me that he feared I had mistaken him, and that, although he could not admit of an addition to his family by my deputy, yet he always wished me to make one of it. I told the aide-de-camp (who was my intimate friend) I had not mistaken him; but, as it was inconvenient to the General to admit my deputy at the same time, the situation of the latter must be so disagreeable that I could

not think of separating from him in such manner. After quitting Wilmington, we were so continually shifting ground, and in places where houses were thinly scattered round, there was no possibility of my deputy's being elsewhere than at head-quarters ; but I know his feelings were much hurt by it.

"On the 4th of October, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith was wounded, and from that time I have been without help. Many wondered I did not get another deputy, or assistant ; but, when I told them the reason, they ceased to wonder, and confessed the case difficult. But I will not tire you further with this detail. Had I remained any longer in the office of Adjutant-General, I would, upon our next move, and always afterwards, have taken separate quarters, and got a deputy. This would have been sometimes very inconvenient, because I came away, you know, altogether unprepared to keep a table of my own : however, I should have been able to do my business with a vast deal more ease and satisfaction, though I must have lived at much greater expense. . . .

"My new appointment I revolved in my mind deliberately ; a variety of motives conspired to lead me to accept it ; and, after concluding that I could serve the public at least to as much advantage as in my present office, every personal consideration was strongly in favor of my accepting it. A more laborious office, I was sure, I could not have ; and the hurry, noise, and bustle of a camp are less compatible with one's ease than the quiet and regular periods of labor and rest to be enjoyed in the country in my new employment." . . .

Having remarked on the probability, that, if his conduct as a member of the Board of War should meet with the approbation of Congress, he might be continued in that office when peace should be established, he proceeds : —

. . . "When my friends read this letter', they may wonder

at the facility with which I contemplate a separation from them. Much pleasure, indeed, have I enjoyed in their society, and still wish to enjoy. Nowhere can I expect to find an equal kindness and affection. But these considerations yield to capital advantages to one's family; and every married man knows that a wife and children are more than parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives combined. Besides, the business of my department may probably carry me in the way of seeing them at least once a year, which is as frequently as they see some other branches of the family not fifty miles distant; and I am sure they would hear from me as often as they do from them, and oftener.

"I expect, the latter end of this week or the beginning of next, to set off for Yorktown, where Congress sits. Millet* will go with me. I gave him full expectation of my serving, during the war, in the military line, and that he should be with me. He enlisted on that footing only. Were I to leave him in the service, I should disappoint and deceive him, and render him very unhappy. I shall therefore procure his discharge, which I think the General will grant without difficulty. The bounties Millet has received from the State of Massachusetts Bay and from the town I shall be ready to refund; and, then, he will be a cheaper servant to me than any I could hire at this time, by far; and his honesty, care, fidelity, and prudence stand unimpeached." . . .

In another letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated "Camp at a place called the Gulf, on the western side of the Schuylkill, fifteen miles from Philadelphia, December 13th, 1777," he wrote, —

. . . "Contrary to my expectation, I still remain in camp. No successor is appointed, nor a deputy, though I have an assistant. I believe I have already told you that Congress have made an addition to the Board of War. Major-General Gates is appointed President, Major-General Mifflin,

* See page 145.

Colonel Trumbull, Mr. Peters (Secretary to the present Board), and myself, at present are the elected members. Gates and Trumbull being at a distance, the Board could not be formed till they had been sent to and it was known that they accepted. Whether they have accepted or not I cannot say: I hope they have. The Board remaining thus unsettled, it was not necessary for me to leave the camp; so now I expect to finish the campaign. This, I trust, will be pretty soon; for the weather is too severe to keep the field, and our soldiers suffer much. The great difficulty is to fix on a proper station for winter-quarters: nothing else prevents our going into them. I wrote to brother John (or Williams), that our winter-quarters would probably be at and about Wilmington (thirty miles below Philadelphia); but it is a point not absolutely determined. The day before yesterday we left our old camp at Whitemarsh, and intended to cross the Schuylkill; but, to our surprise, the head of our column had but just passed when the enemy appeared, which (their strength being unknown) induced the commanding officer to recross it. We halted, and looked at each other some time, and at length we marched to a new camp. It was afterwards found that the enemy were about four thousand strong, under Lord Cornwallis, the body consisting of the grenadiers and light-infantry and some other troops. Half this number, and less, could have easily prevented our crossing the river, their ground was so advantageous and the passage so difficult; for our bridge would only admit two, or, at most, three men to go abreast. Towards night the enemy retired, and yesterday (or rather last night) we crossed over to this place.

“We have had now certain information that this body of the enemy came out to forage, and they have committed, as usual, great devastations; but 'tis some consolation, that these calamities have fallen upon their best friends. This is the county of Chester, and the most disaffected in Pennsylvania. The barbarous wretches even refused to sell their provisions to our wounded men, after the battle of Brandy-

wine, without the solid coin in payment, although they were ready to perish with hunger; and now their kind protectors, the British, have plundered them without mercy or distinction. Such was their wantonness, that what they could not carry off they destroyed; as in breaking furniture in pieces, ripping open beds, and scattering abroad the feathers, &c. With a sword they ripped the clothes from the back of one woman, and cut off one of her fingers. These barbarities will doubtless have their natural effect, — to excite the resentment and alienate the affections of these people, — as we could wish. I was pleased yesterday to see how one old Dutchman and his sons were exasperated. They had been cruelly plundered. One of the sons watched his opportunity, and killed two, wounded two, and took one, of the plunderers; and the old man (who before had hid his rifle) said he would go home, put his rifle in order, and get revenge.

“If we had gained seasonable intelligence of Cornwallis’s being on this expedition, we might probably have taken and destroyed the whole of them; but the first notice we had of them (for they marched out of Philadelphia in the dead of night) was the report of guns in their engagement with one brigade of Pennsylvania militia, under General Potter, who were the back-countrymen, and behaved (three regiments particularly) extremely well. Cornwallis crossed the Schuylkill in his way to the city at the same time that we were crossing hither. Yesterday Colonel Bland, with about fifteen horse, got intelligence of a party of Hessians on a scout; he rushed upon them and made the whole prisoners. The party consisted of a sergeant and ten men; but in the course of the day we lost four of our light-dragoons killed and taken prisoners by the enemy.

“Yesterday two of our officers, prisoners of war, made their escape from Philadelphia; and, as the circumstances are remarkable, I will relate them.

“Captain Plunket was a captain in Colonel Moylan’s regiment of horse, and was taken prisoner when he was on

the point of taking a Hessian lieutenant-colonel. The uniform of Moylan's regiment is red faced with blue. Two or three days since, Captain Plunket dressed himself clean, put on his regimentals, and powdered his hair, and then marched down from the place of his confinement as if he had been a British officer, the sentries thinking him to be one, and paying him the compliment with their arms as he passed. About twenty of our officers were confined in the same room with Plunket, and they were sometimes visited by British officers, which I suppose was the means of the sentries being deceived. The other officer, Lieutenant Whipple, escaped in a manner still more extraordinary. He one day put on a plain blue coat, and by some accident there was in the room a broad-brimmed hat. This also he put on. One of the other officers observed to him, that he appeared very like a Quaker. He walked in, unobserved, to another room of our officers; but soon the sentry discovered him, and, seeing the young Quaker, asked him if he belonged there. Whipple (not having had any thought of escaping) was at first confounded, but, recollecting himself, answered, no, he did not belong there. The sentry then took him out to the Captain of the guard, who examined him strictly, and threatened to send him to the provost for his impudence and presumption in going into the room where the rebel officers were confined; but at length the Captain dismissed him, and bid him be gone. Whipple took him at his word, and came out of the city in his Quaker's habit. Plunket, having escaped from confinement, borrowed the dress of a female Quaker, with her high-heel shoes, &c., and so easily obtained a pass. Some women at the same time brought out his clothes.

"About a fortnight past, Colonel Rawlings (who was taken at Fort Washington), Major Stewart (taken prisoner in Sullivan's expedition to Staten Island), and Lieutenant-Colonel Livingston (taken at Fort Montgomery), all made their escape from a prison-ship at New York. A small skiff came alongside in the evening; one of them saw it; in five

minutes they were in it: they let it drift by two or three ships, and then paddled briskly to the Jersey shore. . . .

"Major Stewart is a fine officer. He told me he had intended to leave the service at the close of the campaign, but now he would fight as long as, and wherever, there was opportunity. Should the British quit America on account of a French war, he would then go to France, and never cease his opposition. Seven days, he says, he was kept without food, and during the whole time of his confinement fared badly, and was treated with all manner of insult. The like complaint you will hear from almost every officer and soldier who makes his escape." . . .

The next day he wrote to Mrs. Pickering:—

"Sunday Evening, nine o'clock, December 14th, 1777.

. . . "Brother John has, since I left home, written me two affectionate letters; in the last, lately received, he wishes my return to see my friends. I most cordially wish I could spend the ensuing Thanksgiving with them. I wish, too, for opportunities of meeting with the people in their assemblies for public worship. I have heard only three or four sermons since I have been in camp. With great truth I may apply to myself Pope's words, —

"'Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me.'

"I long for a little rest, a short period, at least, of relaxation, and the agreeable intercourse I used to enjoy with my friends. But from peace alone do I expect these blessings. Burgoyne, I am told, says Britain will own our independence, and enter into a treaty of commerce; and just now I saw a letter, informing that a Major Eustace, aide-de-camp to Lord Cornwallis, assured a Mr. Willing, that all differences with America would very soon be *accommodated*. But Burgoyne may probably mean an exclusive treaty of commerce with Britain only, and Eustace may expect, possibly, that the differences will be accommodated by our *subjugation*. However, perhaps the expectation of

a French war may have led to the declarations above mentioned. A French war would doubtless procure us the most speedy relief, and, for that reason, is an event to be wished for: at the same time I can hardly reconcile it to my conscience to wish so great a calamity may befall any people. But, on the other hand, the cause of America I consider as the cause of humanity, and that this land will become an asylum for the oppressed in every nation in Europe; and in that view a good man would be willing personally to endure many afflictions.

“I forgot to mention, in the letter enclosed, my escape from great danger. My horse, in leaping over a very low fence, fell down upon his side and threw me; but I received little harm from this; but, whilst I lay entangled with my own horse, another followed, and, in leaping, his feet came directly over me. Had his feet dropped a few inches one way or the other, he might have ruined me. By God’s good providence, the horse did not touch me. This is the first fall I have had since I have been in camp. The ground was hard, a little sidelong, grassy, and slippery.”

In another letter to Mrs. Pickering he wrote:—

“CAMP AT THE VALLEY FORGE, December 21st, 1777.

... “You tell me you embraced the opportunity by Mr. Goodhue to write to me, though you had nothing new to acquaint me with; and yet you filled up nearly three pages. I often begin to write to *you* without a single idea in advance; but my love, ever faithful and alive, suggests at all times some things which I conceive you wish to hear besides the news of the day, which to me are always the dullest part of my letters. I am always happiest when I am adverting to our mutual love and esteem, and to those circumstances which particularly respect ourselves and our little son. I often contemplate (and it has been my principal enjoyment) the bliss we shall feel on our next joyful meeting, though I repine deeply that it is probably at such a distance. ... I think on your peculiar state,—without father, mother,

brother, or sister,* and wish the more to be ever present with you, that in the care, protection, and love of a husband, you may find all these wants more than supplied. I am indeed happier than most men would be; for, though *you* are destitute of, yet I am blessed with, all those dear relatives; and such affection unites the family, that, even in my absence, you must experience from my parents, brothers, and sisters all the fruits of parental and fraternal love. I am deceived if you do not find in them all the kindness which is generally to be expected from *kindred* blood. . . . I remember now you have mentioned their kindness, particularly brother Gardner's, who has been at home, has had it in his power, and has laid himself out, to oblige you. He is a kind-hearted man as lives; and tears of gratitude this moment fill my eyes for the substantial, friendly offices he has done you. My sister Gardner, too, with the strictest economy, is most obligingly generous. . . .

"The army is come to its ground, and this day we begin to hut." . . .

On the 24th of December he again wrote from "Camp at the Valley Forge" to Mrs. Pickering. Adverting to their long separation, he says, —

. . . "This is the fruit of war. Ah! that greater ills did not attend it! Compared with the distresses of some, ours are but slight and temporary inconveniences. We still live, and are even happy in the anticipation of future joys, while multitudes have fallen by the iron hand of war. How many tender, fond connections have been broken by it! How many parents' hearts have been rent with grief, — how many widowed mates, how many spotless virgins (like the drooping lilies), have bowed their heads, oppressed with sorrow, — at the loss of children, husbands, lovers! And, my amiable mate, the possibility that that might be your lot has cost me many a tear. But God has spared

* She had a sister, but then living in England.

me, in mercy to us both, in kindness to my parents and friends, in favor to our sweet babe, and, I hope, not without future benefit to my country. Let us, my dear, ever gratefully acknowledge God's goodness to us, and devoutly pray for the continuance of it." . . .

In the same letter, but under the date of December 29th, he writes:—

. . . "I remain well, and soon expect a summons from Congress to repair to the Board of War at Yorktown; for, contrary to what I had heard, . . . that General Gates was gone to Boston, a friend of mine just from York informs, that Gates had accepted his appointment, and was daily expected there, and that upon his arrival the Board would be formed. I understand there is a vast field of business to be laid open to the Board, so that I despair of seeing you till the spring. Then, I hope and expect to return with you and your boy. . . . The information of my friend, above referred to, renders your coming with me in the spring still more necessary than I had imagined; for, though flour at Yorktown is less than four dollars a hundred, and beef but about eight pence, lawful money, [eleven cents and one ninth,] a pound, yet the members of Congress give thirty-seven dollars and one third a week for their board, without a servant, and but middling fare into the bargain. This sum would be considerably more than the amount of my wages per week; of course I cannot live in that manner. And, as the necessaries of life are so cheap there, 'tis plain this dearness of board must be a most abominable extortion, and enhanced chiefly for cooking your food and finding a bed. Before I heard this, I had thought of a scheme for living at such a moderate expense as would enable me to maintain you and our son, as well as myself. This was by taking lodgings two or three miles out of town. At that distance I imagine I can live at a quarter of the expense; for I would buy my own hay and firewood, and then I should have no

one to pay extravagantly for feeding my horse or my fire ; for Millet can do both, and cook, too, extremely well, if need be. And this distance would by no means hinder me in the general course of business. On the other hand, as I expect close application will be necessary, to ride or walk that distance daily will be extremely beneficial, if not necessary, for my health. Now, the principal necessities of life being thus cheap, were you with me to conduct the family affairs, the whole might . . . be supported at much less, or, at least, without greater expense, than I alone at board. . . .

“Tuesday morning, December 30th. — I might have told you, that, since our arrival at this place, which was on the 20th instant, I have been at my own quarters, separate from the General’s family, at whose quarters they are exceedingly pinched for room ; and, as I am in a house where there is a family, Millet borrows such utensils as are necessary for cooking. Had I conceived how much satisfaction, quiet, and even leisure, I should have enjoyed at separate quarters, I would have taken them six months ago. For at head-quarters there is a continual throng, and my room, in particular, (when I was happy enough to get one,) was always crowded by all that came to head-quarters on business, because there was no other cover for them, we having, for the most part, been in such small houses. Besides, at head-quarters much business passed through my hands, which is now done by the aides-de-camp, and I get rid of, being absent.”

To Mrs. Pickering, December 30th : —

. . . “Nothing new to-day, save the coming in of twenty-one deserters from the enemy, who deserted within a few days past. Four or five of them were Americans, whom they had taken prisoners, and who, to save themselves from starving, had enlisted with them.

“A small party of twenty-five men and two or three subaltern officers of the New-England troops pushed headlong after the enemy, and though urged to return, because an ambuscade laid for them had been discovered, yet they

pressed on, and about fifteen were taken. This happened yesterday.

“A considerable number of our men are in warm, comfortable huts; but others have made little progress as yet, the march of several thousand of the enemy from Philadelphia to Derby (where they remained till the 28th) having obliged a considerable body of our men to leave their work to watch them. The work is also retarded by the scarcity of tools. On Christmas day it snowed, and before the next morning it was four inches deep. The weather has since been clear and cold.”

Again to the same:—

“CAMP AT THE VALLEY FORGE, January 5th, 1778.

... “Yesterday I saw my friend who gave me the information [about the expenses of living at Yorktown]. . . . This friend I speak of is Mr. Boudinot, of New Jersey, Commissary-General of Prisoners, and lately elected a member of Congress. I told him I long ago determined to take lodgings two or three miles from the town, where I could get convenient house-room and stable; and, if I could not board to my satisfaction in such a place, that I would then buy my own provisions, hay, and wood, and Millet should be housekeeper. He was much pleased with my scheme, and intends to live with me. This will be exceedingly agreeable to me, as he is a most worthy, honest, judicious man, and we are intimately acquainted. He added, that, *when you came, it would be still more agreeable*. Upon the whole, unless some very material changes take place, I am resolved (since you consent) to bring you and John along with me in the spring. My mother’s fears of my being taken prisoner are altogether groundless, because nothing will lead me in the way of danger. I am happy to find my father is pleased with my acceptance of a seat at the Board of War: my mother and you, I assured myself, would be pleased in the highest degree. . . .

“The army has made good progress in hutting; but the want of tools has retarded the work. The huts are very

warm and comfortable, being very good log-houses, pointed with clay, and the roof made tight with the same. The weather is now very mild, which is exceedingly favorable to our hutting; but 'tis a melancholy consideration, that hundreds of our men are unfit for duty, merely from the want of clothes and shoes."

In the following letter, of January 8th, to Mrs. Pickering, as well as elsewhere, Colonel Pickering puts a moderate estimate on his knowledge and abilities, and likewise on the virtue of his countrymen. After mentioning that different employments had been successively given him, which furnished him the means of living beyond his highest expectations, he says, —

"These were not, I presume, wholly undeserved. I only regretted my knowledge and abilities were not more equal to their importance. You will smile at this. But, my dear, I speak what I think; at the same time, I have hoped that an upright discharge of the duties of my various offices would in some measure compensate my country for my other wants. Integrity in office is, I fear, too rare. Modes of defrauding the public have taken place, which I hoped had been unknown on this side the Atlantic. And, when I view the general depravity of manners, I sometimes almost think Europe does not exceed us in crimes. The *virtue* of the Americans is often sounded in our ears; I wish there was more reason to boast of it. However, no one should despair of his country. Every good man will endeavor to restrain the vicious, and defeat their pernicious designs; at the same time, by his example and encouragement he will animate and support the virtuous; and, if the effect of all his efforts fall short of his wishes, he will nevertheless console himself with this reflection, — *that he has done his duty.*

"Congress have at length appointed a successor in my office. Colonel Scammell (who is a Massachusetts man, but

commands a New Hampshire regiment) this day received a letter from Congress containing his appointment to be Adjutant-General. I wished for this; for Colonel Scammell is allowed to be an excellent officer, and he has heretofore, with General Lee, been conversant in this kind of duty. He had a liberal education at Harvard College, is sensible and brave. Next week I shall set off for Yorktown."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Board of War. — Correspondence between Colonel Alexander Scammell, appointed Adjutant-General, and Colonel Pickering. — Valley Forge. — Colonel Pickering's Father. — Opinions of Colonel Pickering on Marriage and on Female Dress. — His Benevolence and Tenderness. — Gérard, the French Minister.

ON the 30th of January Colonel Pickering left the camp at Valley Forge for Yorktown, Pennsylvania, to enter upon his duties as a member of the Board of War; but, the Susquehanna being for a few days impassable, he did not arrive there until the 4th of February.

The following extracts from letters of Colonel Scammell show that Colonel Pickering did not overstate the labors of the Adjutant-General, and at the same time they are a testimonial of his efficiency in the office, and of the esteem in which he was held by officers of the army.

“MUDDY FORGE, February 6th, 1778.

. . . “We miss you much here, and believe shall miss you more. I'll assure you, that I am almost tired of the berth [of Adjutant-General], and believe I shall wish that I never had accepted. The trouble is infinitely more than that of a regiment, — more especially one that I was so much attached to as mine, — and the expense vastly greater than when I only commanded my regiment, in proportion to the pay. Here I have no opportunity of gaining any laurels; whereas, when I was with my regiment, I stood a chance of plucking now and then a sprig.

“Besides, to hear the complaints of the officers, and see the miserable situation of the soldiery, is really affecting. It deeply penetrates my inmost soul to see men destitute of clothing, who have risked their lives like brave fellows, having large arrearages of pay due to them, and prodigiously pinched at times for provisions. It is a most melancholy scene. Desertions increase very fast among us, as you may see by the return of the army; and I am really apprehensive they will be still greater, unless regular and plentiful supplies of provisions are furnished them. Several brigades have been without their allowance of meat, this is the third day. God grant it may not be the means of breaking up the army. Discontent runs through the army. Feed and pay our soldiers well, and they will pay you well for their board and wages. At such a time as this, when we want to have our army filled up, such sufferings must be an almost invincible bar; for, depend upon it, [accounts of] the treatment will spread like lightning through the United States. My dear, worthy friend, for Heaven’s sake use your influence to have regular and plentiful channels of supplies established, both of provisions and clothing.”

“February 7th.

... “Can you lay any plan to get Trumbull, or such another man, appointed Commissary *vice* the present one? * Can you find out some way to rouse the States to fill up the army seasonably? Cannot regular supplies of money and clothing for the army be furnished? Your good judgment and perfect acquaintance with our situation are much depended upon. Our prospects are gloomy at present; fatal consequences must soon ensue, unless the above questions can be fully answered and complied with.

“Your affectionate, anxious friend,

“ALEXANDER SCAMMELL.”

* William Buchanan. Jeremiah Wadsworth was chosen, April 9th, 1778.

Colonel Pickering replied, —

“YORKTOWN, February 17th, 1778.

“DEAR SIR,

“Yours of the 6th and 7th instant came to hand yesterday.

. . . “I am very sensibly pained for the distresses of the army; the more because I fear they may not be of short duration. Clothing, however, I hope you have received ere this time; but where an ample and constant supply of flesh can be obtained I am in doubt. Flour, I believe, you will not want. I suppose it scarcely possible to diminish the ration of meat and increase that of bread. The great Turenne’s army had daily two pounds of bread a man, and little meat; and this, I understand, is the practice of the German and French troops to this day, — to eat much bread and little flesh. Marshal Saxe, I recollect, observes, that if you give a full supply of bread to the Germans they are always easy. No people on earth eat such quantities of flesh as the English. But, if our troops had soups every day, thickened with good bread, a much less quantity of meat would suffice. The King of Prussia, I remember, in the regulations for his infantry (which book I have), enjoins it positively upon his officers to see that the men ‘boil the pot every day.’ And I suppose, under that perfect discipline established in his armies, this and every other regulation is punctually obeyed. But, for the establishment of such an exact system, he has had the experience of repeated wars to discover errors and defects, followed by the leisure of peace to correct and supply them. Could the army be persuaded to eat more bread and less meat, the want of vegetables would hardly be felt; and as vegetables are not procured, ’tis the more necessary to use much bread. I wish some good might flow from these hints. Were *you* with your regiment, I know you would be ready to try the experiment, and by your own example induce the soldiery to adopt a mode of living so salutary both to them and the public. Nothing but the example of the officers would possibly avail to effect this matter; and perhaps the attempt

could not be made without the danger of mutiny. But is there no other officer who will with great prudence make the trial? or is the very proposition visionary? Think of it.

“What a fatal change was that of Commissary-General last summer! Congress, too late, are convinced of their error. Besides all the mischiefs to the army during the campaign, it is supposed the department is beyond comparison more expensive than when Colonel Trumbull conducted it. He, by the way, accepts his appointment to the Board of War, but is so sick at present as to keep house, and I fear will not come here for a long time. 'Tis extremely unfortunate, for his knowledge of the Commissary's business would, I trust, point out the way to obtain full supplies of provisions. Early last January this State appointed commissioners in each county to buy provisions for the army. On the 15th, Congress authorized the then Board of War to appoint proper persons for the like purpose, and to form magazines of flour; but they were not to thwart the measures of the commissioners. The Board, accordingly, appointed certain men, whom they called superintendents, and instructed them how to conduct. These men happened to be in opposition to the Constitution. The State grew jealous, thinking the commissioners were equal to the business. The matter was by the Council represented to Congress, who have finally discontinued the superintendents east of the Susquehanna just as they had set the mills a-going. The Board thought their instructions would effectually prevent an interference with the commissioners; . . . they were intended to facilitate their measures. Thus a month of precious time has been lost.

“The Quartermaster-General's department, too, remains unsettled, and General Mifflin, who knows more about it than anybody, is absent. He went home just before I arrived; disgusted, as I understood from Jonathan Mifflin, at the jealousies entertained of him, at camp and elsewhere, that he was, or had been, aiming to remove General Wash-

ington, — a thing he solemnly disavows. Congress also have lately sent him a resolve requiring an account of all the expenditures in his department of Quartermaster-General. By such means public business, which demands instant attention, and is essential to the safety of the States, is postponed, although the campaign is at hand! If we do not lay aside jealousies and resentments, and apply hard to *real* business, we shall be ruined.

“The present situation of public affairs reminds me of the distracted state of Britain the first years of the last war. Would to God we had some great, some patriot Pitt, to rescue us from impending danger, and conduct us to victory and glory, by a wise arrangement and vigorous execution of public measures! But where shall the man be found?

“But I need not add distress to the melancholy picture you painted. Yet let us not despair. From the midst of difficulties we have repeatedly been relieved. A kind Providence has saved us, and I trust will yet render us secure, if we are not grossly wanting to ourselves.

“I am, dear Sir, your friend and servant,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.”

A letter to his wife, dated Yorktown, February 14th, 1778, exhibits the simple style in which Colonel Pickering lived when a Commissioner of the Board of War; which, however, was an agreeable contrast to his previous life in camp. In allusion to her joining him at Yorktown, he says, —

“’Tis more difficult getting a habitation than I expected. I was puzzled to find a place to lodge at. Finally I was led to the widow Mihmin’s (the widow of a Dutch physician); but she said she had no bed but one, her own, nor could furnish me with diet. I told her I could find both. So she consented to take me in. I am happy that she did; for she is a very neat, clever, obliging old woman, and has agreed to wash and mend my linen and stockings, which is a great

thing here. What her price will be I do not know, but I am sure not extravagant. . . . The old lady often puts me in mind of my mother. . . . She is in all respects very kind and motherly. I have not felt myself so much at home since I left Salem. She lived all alone, and now sits from morning till night at her spinning-wheel, which, by the way, is a very modest one; and when I am at home, writing or reading, it gives me no more disturbance than the purring of a cat. She has one decent lower room, warmed by a stove, after the German fashion (she is of that nation), and a small kitchen, furnished with every necessary utensil, in pretty order. There she gets her own victuals, and Millet cooks for me. . . . Besides the lower room and kitchen, there is a warm chamber where I lodge; in one corner Millet has fixed me a little cabin, in which he has put a straw bed, and upon that my mattress; a bag of straw makes my bolster, and my pillow is upon that. I lie between my sheet doubled (the other sheet was stolen from me at Wilmington last September); my blanket lies double upon that, and my great-coat and other clothes over all. In this manner I have every night lain warm and comfortable. In another corner of the chamber Millet lies on a bed of chaff, furnished by the landlady. These chaff beds are very good. 'Tis the chaff of wheat, and is much preferable to straw. Millet has bought tolerable veal at a shilling [thirteen cents and a third] a pound, butter at two thirds of a dollar, eggs at one third of a dollar a dozen, and potatoes at a dollar a bushel; but, above all, he gets a quart of good milk every night and every morning, which, with good bread (at a third of a dollar a loaf of about six pounds weight), makes our breakfasts and suppers. But half the time, as we dine late, we eat no suppers; so we have milk enough for good puddings. The milk costs me twelve pence a quart. At the next door Millet gets excellent beer of a brewer at half a dollar a gallon. Thus my diet is perfectly agreeable. I have directed Millet to get some rice and Indian meal, and when these are obtained I shall want for nothing.

"This little detail I thought would no more than satisfy your curiosity ; at the same time I supposed it might divert you and my friends. . . .

"I confess, notwithstanding all I have said, that I have many doubts about the expediency of your coming this way so soon as I at first proposed. I say *so soon*, because, if we regain Philadelphia in the course of the next campaign (which I trust we shall), and all things get quiet here, and I be likely to continue at the Board of War, I shall then most certainly determine to bring you away from Salem, and not pass another winter without you."

The illness of Colonel Pickering's father, which in a few months terminated fatally, occasioned the following letter :—

"YORKTOWN, February 23d, 1778.

"MY HONORED FATHER,

"With much grief I received the account of your indisposition, but at the same time was happy to find you rather growing better, and that there was a prospect of your recovery. Not that I deemed you anxious to live ; I supposed the contrary ; but, whether to live or die, I know you are perfectly resigned to the will of Heaven. But, for the sake of your family and friends, I wished you to live yet many years, that I, too, might again see you, and manifest that filial duty which I feel and would cheerfully pay to your latest breath. When I look back on past time, I regret our difference of sentiment in great as well as little politics, as it was a deduction from the happiness otherwise to have been enjoyed. Yet you had always too much regard to freedom in thinking and the rights of conscience to lay upon me any injunctions which could interfere with my own opinion of what was my duty. In all things I have endeavored to keep a good conscience, void of offence towards God and man. Often have I thanked my Maker for the greatest blessing of my life, — *your example and instructions in all the duties I owe to God and my neighbor.* They have

not been lost upon me, though I am aware that in many things I have offended and come short of my duty. For these things I am grieved, but not as those who have no hope. I am deeply indebted, too, for your care in my education; I only regret that I improved my time no better. But, although the line of action I have pursued has not always been such as you would have chosen, yet (but I boast not), in regard to religion and morality, I hope you have never repented that I was your son. By God's grace I will, in my future life, aim at higher attainments in those all-essential points, not only from a sense of duty to my Creator, from a regard to my own happiness here and beyond the grave, but that I may never wound the breast of a parent to whom I am under so many and so great obligations. My love and duty to you and my mother, conclude me your obedient son,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.”

The difference of sentiment in “great politics,” I suppose, refers to the forcible resistance to the mother country. Nathaniel Peaslee Sargent, a Justice of the Superior Court of Massachusetts, who had married a sister of Colonel Pickering, wrote to him from Haverhill, April 12th, 1778:—

“We have lately been at Salem; found all our old friends well but our honored father, who continued poorly last Friday. He seems to retain his reason pretty well, and goes to meeting, but is as much inclined to Toryism as ever.” *

* He could not, however, have approved of the conduct of the mother country towards the Colonies; for, in a communication in his handwriting, in the City-Clerk's office in Salem, dated October 21st, 1765, and addressed to Benjamin Lynde, Moderator, in which he deprecates inconsiderate and violent proceedings against the Stamp Act, he says, “We would not be here understood as though it was our principle tamely to submit to every law made by lawful authority, whether it be right or wrong, good or bad; for this would be to lower ourselves down into passive obedience and non-resistance.” He also

Colonel Pickering pretty uniformly felt confident of the ultimate success of the Americans in the Revolution; and, in a letter, dated Yorktown, March 6th, 1778, to his wife, he assigns a substantial reason:—

... “I enjoy my health perfectly, and should be very happy, if our public affairs wore a better aspect. If we should fail at last, the Americans can blame only their own negligence, avarice, and want of almost every public virtue. For common sense will inform every one, that a country filled with four or five hundred thousand men able to bear arms, and having all the necessary means in its hands, cannot be conquered by twenty thousand mercenaries, unless it is totally wanting in duty to itself.” ...

His sentiments in regard to female beauty, and on marriage, and his benevolent disposition, are exhibited in a letter to Mrs. Pickering, as follows:—

“YORKTOWN, March 8th, 1778.

... “Why does not Clarke * write to me? Tell him I heard but three sermons during the eight months I was in camp, and that one from him would be seasonable and highly acceptable. His call to the *metropolis*, I hope, will not make him forgetful of his friend of the *village*. ... If he has accepted his call, I presume he has thought of a *helpmeet* ere this time. ... He used formerly to ask my advice about some things. Were he to ask it about the choice of a wife, I should remark to him, that, in marrying,

presided, as moderator, at a town-meeting in May, 1770, respecting a non-importation agreement, and at another in the following September, at which resolutions were passed against four persons as violators of the non-importation agreement. He joined in a subscription in July, 1776, to enable a committee to hire the men ordered to be levied in Salem to reinforce the northern army.

* The Rev. John Clarke, a favorite nephew of Colonel Pickering. At this time he had been invited to become a minister of the First Church in Boston, as the colleague of Dr. Chauncy. He was the author of “Letters to a Student,” and other works.

he could have but one principal aim — to be happy with a deserving female; of consequence, that he must slight honors, birth, and fortune, if not accompanied with real worth. On the other hand, I should not expect him to be *captivated* with very *engaging qualities* under an *ugly* form. Beauty, or an agreeable face and person, is lovely and commanding. I confess, I (yes, even *I*) am involuntarily led to respect it wherever I meet with it. Be not alarmed, my dearest! — that very circumstance contributed to excite and fix my fondness, my unalterable attachment, to you. An agreeable form, innocence, simplicity, good sense, and a decent education, with a disposition gentle, faithful, and affectionate, are the only foundation of real happiness in the nuptial state. And, that there may be no deception and disappointment in an affair the most important in human life, the *contracting parties* ought to be perfectly explicit, and not by any means conceal the faults and foibles in their conduct and dispositions, unless they can and will cure them. If their failings would, in their apprehension, disgust, and prevent a union, if discovered, they will assuredly mar, if not destroy, their happiness when united. And who, that has any prudence, or even self-love, would plunge himself in misery? And what misery in life so dreadful as an unhappy marriage! Clarke may smile, perhaps, at these remarks from an old bachelor,* if he sees them; or, if not, at least deem them unnecessary with regard to him. But he will forgive me, as he knows I wish him every happiness life can yield.

“And now, my Becky, what can I say to you that I have not told you over and over, till you are tired with the repetition? Did I possess a creative imagination, I would frame some story to amuse you. But ‘simple truth,’ you know, is my ‘utmost skill’; and my sincerity and fond affection you are pleased to accept in the room of qualities more striking and brilliant. . . . But few of mortal race possess every valuable talent; and I would be contented

* Colonel Pickering was in his thirty-first year at the time of his marriage.

with my mediocrity, since Heaven has so ordained. Thankful I am for all His gifts, but for none more than for a spirit of benevolence towards all mankind, — a wish to diffuse virtue and happiness universally, and especially to study and promote the felicity of those with whom I am connected by the tenderest ties; and of these, my dear Becky, you are the first and chief. Heaven has been still more bountiful, and given me *you*, — you who possess a tender, feeling heart, that is kind to all, and perfectly attuned to harmony and love. Oh! how painful is the separation from one so amiable! How much does it grieve me to leave you alone, and for so many long, tedious months!” . . .

The two following letters from Colonel Pickering to his wife relate to the illness, death, and character of his father, and furnish one of many evidences of a tenderness of feeling which some persons have supposed he did not possess. The first is dated Yorktown, April 26th, 1778.

. . . “You will probably be informed by brother John, before this reaches you, that I did not expect to see you this spring. I wrote you a line, at the same time, by Captain Pike, of Newbury; but I could not bear to tell you then what would render you so unhappy. General Gates is ordered by Congress to take the command on Hudson’s River; Colonel [Joseph] Trumbull is yet unable, through want of health, to attend the Board [of War], nor expects to be able before autumn, and has, in fact, desired Congress to appoint a member in his stead; and I am not certain but General Mifflin will leave us also, to take the lead of the Pennsylvania militia, in case the enemy should make a push. I do not know anybody who would be so likely to rouse the militia as he; and they will need a spur: I wish, with the sharpest, they may have feeling enough to turn out briskly in case of need. In this state of things it is impossible for me to break away. I could not consistently with my honor

or duty, neither of which, I am sure, you would have me infringe. I am sensibly affected on another account, that I cannot at this time go home. Millet says my father bid him tell me that he should probably not see me again, if I continued much longer absent. My tears flow at the thought. Could my presence or aid prolong his existence, I would fly to his relief; or, if my father were anxiously concerned to see me before he drops the veil of flesh, I would go home. But I know his firmness of mind, his piety, his confidence in Heaven, and thence his entire resignation to the will of God; and that his anxiety is not to live long, but to live well. You, my dearest, will be kind enough to present my duty to him and to my mother." . . .

In the other letter alluded to, of May 24th, having learned that his father had grown weaker, he says, —

. . . "I was in hopes the warm weather would have restored him; but now I fear his prediction will be verified, and that I shall see him no more. Pray, my dear, present him with my affectionate love and duty, if this reaches you before he leaves all mortal cares. It would have been a satisfaction to me to have seen my father again; and, could my presence have yielded him comfort or relief, it should not have been denied. But, my love, the consolations of a good man are derived from a higher and better source than any on earth. . . . His family have abundant reason to be grateful, that his life and health have been spared so long." . . .

In the following letter, also to Mrs. Pickering, after a notice of the favorable impression made by Gérard, the Minister from France, then just arrived, Colonel Pickering criticizes the ladies' head-dresses. His taste preferred simplicity both in dress and in deportment.

“PHILADELPHIA, July 19th, 1778.

. . . “The *Sieur Gérard*, Minister Plenipotentiary from the court of France, arrived in the French fleet. I should take him to be fifty years old. He has a fine, piercing eye, and a most agreeable countenance. Everybody is pleased with him. He speaks English tolerably.

“I mentioned to you the enormous head-dresses of the ladies here. The more I see, the more I am displeased with them. ’Tis surprising how they fix such loads of trumpery on their polls; and not less so, that they are by any one deemed ornamental. The Whig ladies seem as fond of them as others. I am told, by a French gentleman, they are in the true French taste, only that they want a few very long feathers. The married ladies, however, are not all infected. One of the handsomest (*General Mifflin’s* lady) I have seen in the State, does not dress her head higher than was common at Salem a year ago. . . . But you know, my dear, I have odd, old-fashioned notions. Neither powder nor pomatum has touched my head this twelvemonth, not even to cover my baldness. The latter I find a very common thing, now men have left off their wigs. I observe a few men—members of Congress as well as others—like plainness and simplicity in dress as well as I do.”

CHAPTER XIV.

The Board of War.—The Business of the Board is transacted chiefly by Colonel Pickering and Richard Peters. — The Deputy Commissary-General of Military Stores, arrested for Frauds, and condemned. — His Principal, Colonel Benjamin Flower, arrested also, but honorably acquitted. — Congress offended by the Part taken in the Case by Colonel Pickering and Mr. Peters. — Their Explanation. — Letters at a later Period between them on the Subject. — Anecdote of Dr. Witherspoon.

AT the Board of War, Colonel Pickering had at different times, as associates, several distinguished men; but, while he acted as a member, the burden of the office rested upon him and Mr. Peters, and afterwards upon Mr. Peters alone, until towards the end of the war, when the duties of the Board were transferred to a Secretary of War.

An unfortunate occurrence placed both of them, for a short time, in an unpleasant relation with Congress. On the 20th of June, 1778, the Committee on the Treasury reported that there were errors in the accounts of Benjamin Flower, Commissary-General of Military Stores, which indicated fraud on the part of his deputy, Cornelius Sweers; whereupon the Board of War, in obedience to an order of Congress, caused Sweers to be arrested, and his property to be sequestered.* On the 18th of July, Sweers's wife wrote to Colonel Pickering, saying she was encouraged to address him by "the

* Journals of Congress, June 20th and 27th, and August 1st, Vol. IV. pp. 362, 386, 438.

universal good character she had heard of his humanity and tenderness"; asserting the integrity of her husband; representing, that in the service of process she had been subjected to insult; that, if her husband had been "a person of mean birth and brought up to the crafts of the world, he could not have been treated with less humanity"; and that she and her family were in great distress; and requesting Colonel Pickering's interposition, in order that her husband might be brought to a speedy trial, and, in the mean time, be admitted to bail.

To this he returned the following answer:—

PHILADELPHIA, July 18th, 1778.

"MADAM,

"I hope your opinion of my humanity and tenderness is not ill grounded. I feel every disposition to relieve the distressed. But *justice* also should form a part of the character of every good man. Congress, attentive to the public interests, upon the appearance of strong marks of an intention to defraud the States of considerable sums of money, ordered Mr. Sweers to be secured. I sincerely wish he may prove himself innocent; but till this is done he must unavoidably submit to many inconveniences. I do not imagine his situation will appear to the unbiassed singularly hard, if the crime with which he is charged be duly weighed. The public have a right to be secured against a loss in the case. Such confinement must doubtless be more irksome to a person of good birth and delicately brought up; but 'tis fit it should be, because such a one will commonly be intrusted with matters of great concern, which demand every tie of nature and sanction of law to secure [them] from violation. Nevertheless, as the crime alleged is pecuniary, I should suppose Mr. Sweers might be set at liberty, if any means can be contrived to secure the United States from any loss, if fraud should appear. I will therefore make

known to the Treasury Board your wishes and offer of sureties without delay, and take such other steps as shall lead to procure Mr. Sweers all reasonable relief. I am really grieved at an event which must necessarily give you so much pain. The distress must unavoidably be so great, that no person of the least sensibility would willingly have added to it, but, in executing the order of Congress, have treated you and your family with all possible tenderness and indulgence. I am," &c.

On the 1st of August a letter from the Board of War was read in Congress, representing that Sweers had been secured in such manner as the Board deemed sufficient while it remained doubtful in a degree whether or not he had been guilty of frauds against the States; but that, the matter being now reduced to a certainty, and the sums deficient amounting to many thousand pounds, the Board were uneasy at his remaining guarded only by sentries. Thereupon it was ordered by Congress, that Sweers be immediately confined in the public jail in Philadelphia, and that he be charged, generally, with malconduct in his office, and, particularly, with the crime of forgery.

Sweers then, in the hope of obtaining favor for himself, wrote letters implicating his superior; and, on the 3d of August, Congress passed the following orders:—

“Colonel Benjamin Flower, Commissary-General of Military Stores, being charged with malconduct in the execution of his office, —

“Ordered, that he be arrested and safely kept until the further order of Congress.

“Ordered, that the Board of War carry into execution the above order.” *

* Journals of Congress, Vol. IV. pp. 439, 440, 441.

The next day the following letter from the Board of War was sent to the President of Congress :—

“WAR OFFICE, August 4th, 1778.

“SIR,

“Yesterday afternoon the Board received an order of Congress, that Colonel Flower, Commissary-General of Military Stores, being charged with misconduct in the execution of his office, should be *arrested* and *safely kept*. The word *arrest*, in military language, has a determinate signification ; but the phrase *safely kept* does not ascertain the manner in which Colonel Flower should be secured. He may be put under guard, or confined in jail ; the latter only will *insure* his being *safely kept*. But, before either be done, we entreat Congress to permit us to observe, that Colonel Flower has, till this time, ever sustained the fairest character ; that in all his transactions with this Board he has ever discovered the strongest marks of pure integrity, and nice, unblemished honor, great diligence, knowledge, and activity in business, and the most disinterested patriotism. In one word, we should have pronounced him a public officer of *singular worth*. Even the first imputation against him, — that of a supposed negligence in not minutely examining Sweers’s accounts (if in fact he did not), — we believe, arose from his own guileless, unsuspecting honesty : the event, however, would have taught him sufficient caution in future.

“With these sentiments, it was matter of surprise and grief to find him charged with misconduct, and such misconduct as required his person to be *safely kept*. But our pain did not spring from an apprehension that he would be found guilty. We felt for a man appearing to us possessed of the keenest sensibility, integrity, and honor. He is laboring, too, under an ill habit of body, the effect of great fatigues and exposures in the public service upon a constitution naturally delicate. We even feared the consequences might be fatal, and that he might fall a victim to the malice of a detected villain, unless the motions of an

indignant spirit should support and invigorate a feeble frame.

“Possessed of sentiments like these, Congress will see with what extreme pain and reluctance the Board must have carried the resolve into execution, had Colonel Flower, at the time of receiving it, been within our reach. We may possibly be mistaken; but we are still sanguine, that Colonel Flower will manifest his innocence. The charge originates from a man against whom there is clear evidence of the most palpable frauds, and who, though conscious of his guilt, has had the effrontery to make to this Board repeated and solemn protestations of his innocence. We know, too, that his wife (who has been with him almost continually since she came to town) repeatedly discovered strong marks of resentment against Colonel Flower, and dropped intimations that he was the cause of the severities (as she called them) of her husband’s confinement. We cannot, therefore, from a view of all circumstances, but conclude, that revenge and some other obvious motives are the sole foundation of the accusation against Colonel Flower. We beg leave to add, that an immediate suspension of Colonel Flower, before any steps are taken preparatory to his trial, will necessarily interrupt and retard public business, and in the midst of a campaign may prove highly injurious to the States. We have not the most distant suspicion that he would attempt to escape. He possesses considerable property in this city.

“For these reasons we beseech Congress to excuse an immediate execution of the order; or, at least, that a military arrest be the only restraint on his person; or, if the order in its present form *must* be executed, that Congress will be pleased to declare, explicitly, what is intended by the words *safely kept*, that we may make no mistake in complying with their direction. We are,” &c.

“By order of the Board,

“TIM. PICKERING,

“*President.*”

Upon the reading of this letter in Congress, on the 4th of August, it was moved to resolve, "That the said letter, signed, 'By order of the Board, Tim. Pickering,' is a breach of the privilege of Congress." The consideration of this resolution was postponed; and it was "Resolved, That the execution of the resolution of yesterday, relative to the arrest of Colonel Benjamin Flower, Commissary of Military Stores, be committed to Major-General Arnold." The next day a letter from Arnold was read, "informing that, in pursuance of the resolution of Congress, 'he has arrested Colonel Benjamin Flower in the usual manner,' and desiring an explanation of the resolution with respect to the *safe keeping* of Colonel Flower." Whereupon it was "Resolved, That Mr. President inform Major-General Arnold, that it is the intention of Congress, that Colonel Benjamin Flower should be securely kept in a convenient room under a sufficient guard."

On the 7th of August, the motion made on the 4th respecting the letter signed, "By order of the Board, Tim. Pickering," being withdrawn, it was moved to resolve:—

"That it is the duty of the Board of War implicitly to obey and execute every order or direction of Congress, agreeably to the terms of such order or direction; and that any neglect or delay in executing any order of Congress, and every excuse for disobedience, and any evasion to execute such order, is a breach of duty, and derogatory to the authority, honor, and dignity of Congress: That the letter of the 4th instant, signed, 'By order of the Board, Tim. Pickering,' cannot be considered the act of the Board of War, because the resolve of Congress of the 21st day of April requires that not less than three persons be present to constitute a Board of War: That T. Pickering, Esq., by

writing the said letter, and Richard Peters, Esq., by assenting thereto, were guilty of a high insult to this House: That, by requesting Congress to excuse them from an immediate execution of their order to arrest and safely keep Colonel Benjamin Flower, they were guilty of a breach of duty: That, by requesting Congress that a military arrest should be the only restraint on the person of Colonel Flower, they were guilty of a disobedience to the authority of Congress: That their offering reasons to prove the innocence of Colonel Flower was insolent and affrontive: That, by expressing their extreme pain and reluctance to carry [into execution] the resolve of Congress to arrest and safely keep Colonel Flower, they were guilty of a disobedience to the power and authority of Congress, and that their conduct was insolent and affrontive to the honor and dignity of Congress."

In lieu of this ebullition of excitement, an amendment was moved, directing Colonel Pickering and Colonel Peters to attend at the bar of the House, to answer questions touching the order requiring the Board of War to arrest and safely keep Colonel Flower, and touching their letter of the 4th of August. The consideration of this amendment was postponed to the next day, when the following letter, draughted by Colonel Peters, and addressed to the President of Congress, was read:—

“WAR OFFICE, August 8th, 1778.

“SIR,

“We are extremely concerned to hear, that a letter addressed to you on the subject of Colonel Flower’s arrest has given offence to Congress. We are much pained at the recollection, that the attention of Congress should be drawn off from more important concerns by any proceeding of ours. We mean, on every occasion, to lend our feeble aid in forwarding the public business, and never intentionally to

embarrass Congress, or thwart their measures. In the case in question, we thought the order not perfectly clear, and therefore asked an explanation. A favorable opinion of Colonel Flower, acquired by an attention to his conduct as a public officer, and our feeling for his present infirm condition, prevailed too far, and induced us to mix private sentiments in a public letter, and (we confess, very improperly) to travel into the evidence inducing Congress to give the order. As we would not wish anything to remain on the files of Congress which has given them offence, we entreat the return of the letter, especially as the occasion of writing it does not now exist, as Colonel Flower is confined, agreeably to the intention of Congress; which they explained, as we are informed, to General Arnold. We are," &c.

"TIM. PICKERING,

"RICHARD PETERS."

Colonel Pickering, at the same time, wrote to the President of Congress as follows:—

"WAR OFFICE, August 8th, 1778.

"SIR,

"It is with concern I hear that a letter sent from the Board of War, the 4th instant, and signed by me, has given offence to Congress; and that it has been imagined, by some of the members, that my colleague, Mr. Peters, was the principal author of such parts of it as have awakened the displeasure of the Honorable House. As I feel my honor concerned in not giving weight, by my silence, to suspicions which may prove injurious to another person, I flatter myself Congress will pardon my taking up their time in simply stating to them in what manner it originated. Colonel Flower I knew was a man of exquisite sensibility. He was sick, though abroad; and I doubted whether he could survive a close confinement: humanity wished him relief. I thought him an officer of uncommon fidelity, and that justice demanded our testimony in his favor. It hap-

pened that I heard on what grounds the order was given. I thought the world, who knew Colonel Flower's character and conduct in the public service, and the character of Mr. Sweers, would deem the evidence of the latter, circumstanced as it was, too slender to subject the former to the disgrace and inconveniences of being put in safe custody. *I* supposed, therefore, that the honor of Congress was concerned, and that it was our duty, as public officers, to give such information as might happily prevent the execution of a measure, which, in its consequences, might detract from the dignity and lessen the influence of Congress. Colonel Flower being the active head of a very important department, I feared his sudden suspension (which might, as in similar instances, continue for months before a trial could possibly be had) would, in the midst of a campaign, prove greatly injurious to these States, and that, from a regard to the public interest, we were bound to mention it. Added to this, the order did not appear to us sufficiently explicit; which induced us to ask an explanation.

"Impressed, Sir, with these sentiments, in the simplicity and warmth of my heart I wrote the letter in question. Mr. Peters wrote a letter on the occasion in a different form. I offered an objection to it, and then read my own. We had no time to lose; the day was far spent. We feared the House would rise; and I was concerned lest we should miss the only opportunity of obtaining a relaxation of the order before Colonel Flower came to town. So Mr. Peters, though not altogether satisfied, agreed that my hasty draught should be sent; expecting, as he has since informed me, that it would go through the hands of Mr. Duer, who, as one of the Board, would judge of the propriety of it. Whatever, therefore, Congress may determine concerning it, I wish the consequences may be confined to me. It will make me very unhappy if my rashness should subject another man to censure. I am, Sir, respectfully, your most obedient servant,

"TIM. PICKERING."

On the same 8th of August it was resolved, "That Congress do admit the letter of this date, signed, 'Tim. Pickering' and 'Richard Peters,' as a sufficient atonement for the letter of the 4th instant signed, 'By order of the Board, Tim. Pickering.'"

Colonel Pickering, writing to his wife on the 11th of August, says, in reference to this affair of Colonel Flower:—

"A general account of it is contained in the enclosed letter to brother Williams. I send it to you, because it is a pleasure to me to communicate it, and because I know you would wish to be acquainted with everything affecting my character and conduct. A more particular account I must reserve till I shall be indulged the happiness of giving it to you with my own mouth. My intention is, that you should keep the letter to yourself, for the present; but, if you hear any reports about the matter to my disadvantage, then deliver the letter to Mr. Williams, to show it for my justification.

"I have the satisfaction to inform you, that I have lost no ground by the affair, unless perhaps with the illiberal and cruel. It has, I am told by some friends, represented me in an amiable light to every candid and generous mind. You, my sweet girl, I know will do me the justice to believe, that I acted from the purest and most disinterested motives; that what I did was dictated by truth, justice, and humanity. And I trust you know also, that, when acting under the influence of those principles, it is not my temper to be anxious about personal consequences. Not that I am indifferent to praise or censure; I could wish for the approbation of all mankind; but, to give me any pleasure, it must be attended with a consciousness that I deserve it. Merely to gain applause, I do not recollect that I ever did anything in my life. If it followed the doing what appeared to be my duty, it made me happy; if, in such case, it was denied me, yet,

conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, I enjoyed tranquillity and peace of mind. . . .

“I did not know, while the affair above mentioned was in agitation, but Congress would have eased us of our anxiety, by letting me go home, not to return: perhaps you would not have been sorry, provided I had nothing to reproach myself with as the occasion of it.”

In another letter to his wife, dated the 18th of August, Colonel Pickering recurs to the same subject:—

“In my last, by Captain Joseph White, I enclosed an account of the proceedings of Congress relative to Colonel Flower, and to Mr. Peters and me. I have forgotten whether I mentioned our having written an explanatory letter to Congress, who, thereupon, voted it satisfactory. A committee of Congress have since examined into the charge against Colonel Flower, and find him innocent; and so reported him to Congress, and moved that he should be discharged with honor: but, forgetting one small circumstance in point of time, it gave occasion to one member to propose a reëxamination; and a new committee was appointed accordingly. But I would venture to vouch for Flower’s innocence as soon as for my own. The villain who accused him confessed to the committee, that he could lay nothing to Flower, except the single article he alleged against him. But ’tis evident the rascal persisted in this merely because he first raised the lie and afterwards swore to it. And the committee, on examination into the supposed fraud, found it could amount only to eight pounds odd, of which there was not the shadow of proof but the accusation of an abandoned wretch who has defrauded the Continent of thousands, and for which he was then, and is still, in close jail. Had Congress been disposed to receive the information the Board offered them, they would have prevented much distress to Colonel Flower, and they would have prevented a diminution of their own honor and a great loss to the public; for I expect, as soon as Colonel Flower’s

character is cleared from dishonorable imputations, that he will resign : and a more honest and valuable officer I do not know anywhere."

Justice was at length done to Colonel Flower. On the 24th of August, the committee to whom were referred the papers relative to him and Sweers reported, among other things, that, having confronted Sweers and Colonel Flower, the latter positively denied every part of the charge against him by the former ; that Sweers, during his examination, appeared to be under fears and apprehensions ; that Colonel Flower, during his examination, appeared possessed of a confidence of his innocence ; and that, in the opinion of the committee, the integrity of Colonel Flower stands unspotted, notwithstanding the charge by Sweers.

Thereupon the following resolution was passed :—

"Whereas, After minute inquiry, it has appeared to Congress, that the integrity of Colonel Benjamin Flower, Commissary-General of Military Stores, remains unspotted, notwithstanding the charge by Cornelius Sweers, Deputy Commissary-General of Military Stores, against Colonel Flower, for fraud in his office, —

"Resolved, That Colonel Benjamin Flower be discharged from his arrest, and permitted to resume the functions of his office."

Many years later, this affair became the subject of the following correspondence between Judge Peters and Colonel Pickering. A comparison of it with the foregoing letters and Journals of Congress will show (as might well be expected) some inaccuracies of recollection. Mr. Peters mentions certain additional circumstances. In his letter dated Belmont (his country

seat, near Philadelphia), September 17th, 1823, he says: —

“DEAR SIR,

“By mere accident I took up, a day or two ago, the first volume of the Secret Journals of Congress, sent to me by the Secretary of State, who is authorized to distribute them; and, at the opening of the book, the 81st page presented itself. With surprise I saw, — ‘August 4th, 1778. — A letter of *this day*, from the Board of War, . . . was read.’”

After a statement of specific charges contained in the motions made on the 4th and 7th of August, the letter proceeds: —

“Then a sweeping philippic on our conduct, as insolent and affrontive. An amendment, in lieu of the whole, was moved, — that we should be directed to attend the House to answer questions. . . . The further consideration of this was postponed to the next day, by yeas and nays. Meantime, several of the members, who had been under much prejudice and sensation, but had reflected calmly on the subject, called on us, in a friendly way, and desired us to write some letter which would afford them, and possibly the House, an opportunity of justifying them in giving the affair the turn we had requested: that was, to order General Arnold, who then commanded the troops in the city, to execute the order of Congress. We complied with their wishes; * knowing that Arnold could arrest Flower only according to military rules, he [Flower] being a Colonel in the line, commanding the regiment of artillery artificers, as well as Commissary-General of Military Stores. You, having written the first letter, requested me to write the last, which I accordingly did. There were no other mem-

* That the resolution that Arnold should make the arrest, originated with Colonels Peters and Pickering, seems doubtful, as this resolution was passed on the same day on which the offensive letter was read in Congress.

bers of the Board, either active or attendant.* The whole of the arduous labors was generally thrown on us; and we cared nothing about precedency. Sometimes one of us, and sometimes the other, styled ourselves *President*, in letters or papers, according as the one or the other did the business; and most commonly signed without such addition. After you left me,† the *Board*, very commonly, consisted of *myself*, though occasionally others attended. Sometimes members of Congress were authorized to compose part of the Board. But they were, for the most part, solemn witnesses.

“I calculated the last letter so as to avoid everything like warmth, and yet firmly to adhere to our first opinion, declaring, at the same time, most sincerely, that we had not the most distant idea of treating Congress with disrespect. We considered ourselves bound to regard military rank and rules, and so to act as not to offend the feelings of the officers by treating one of respectable rank, and to us well known, — having been long under our immediate notice, — as a criminal, guilty of a base and scandalous offence. I concluded the letter by expressing *our satisfaction that Congress had placed the matter in the train we had suggested*: ‡ which had been done. I speak from memory, which, in such cases, is *yet* faithful; the letters and all the War-Office papers having been burnt at Washington. The *conclusion* I well remember; because some member of Congress had charged *me* with writing the first letter; declaring *you* to be more prudent. Now, the fact being directly the reverse, you — *à la mode de Pickering* — wrote (unknown to me,

* According to Colonel Pickering's letter of August 8th, 1778, to the President of Congress, Mr. Peters expected that their letter of the 4th would go through the hands of Mr. Duer, one of the Board. See page 224.

† About the 5th of August, 1780, when Colonel Pickering was appointed Quartermaster-General.

‡ This allegation seems not strictly in accordance with the letter. (See page 226.) But the first letter to Congress requested an explanation of the terms *safely kept*, in the order to arrest Colonel Flower, and the conclusion of the second letter reminds them *significantly*, that to General Arnold, who had made the like request, they *had* explained their intention.

who would not have so done) to Congress, that *you* had written the letter, and I had reluctantly consented to some passages in it, objecting to the phraseology, though agreeing cordially in the general sentiments. Old Dr. Witherspoon, member for New Jersey, who had been heated up (as were the members of Congress generally) by the novel and supposed atrocity of Flower, and always had voted for the censure on us, said 'he was glad of the opportunity of closing an unpleasant business, as it regarded us, who always had been heretofore known and esteemed as faithful officers.' He said, sarcastically, in his appropriate style, that, 'though there had been allegations and doubts as to the writer of the first letter, there could be none in relation to the writer of the second. It was *epigrammatical*, and had a sting in the tail of it, whereof he was willing to bear his share.' This was related to me by my friend Robert Morris, who was also rejoiced at getting rid of the business, which he declared he had not, at first, sufficiently understood. And in this many others concurred, who occasionally and amicably conversed with me on the subject. The resolve of August 8th, on which day, it appears, our last letter was dated, recites its having been read; and it was moved to resolve, 'That Congress do admit the letter of this date, signed T. Pickering and R. Peters, as a sufficient *atonement* for the letter of the 4th instant, signed *By order of the Board, T. Pickering.*' After a motion for the previous question, which was negatived, the main question was put, and carried in the affirmative. Thus ended, to the no small pleasure of the members generally, a misconceived business; which was the first and the last misunderstanding, or want of harmony, between Congress and either of us, during your stay in the Board, or my abidance in the department from its first institution, in June, 1776, until I turned over, in November, 1781, its duties to General Lincoln; as may be seen in the old Journals of that highly respectable and meritorious body of Revolutionary patriots, who meant well even in their errors.

“You must remember, that, on the information to Congress of an atrocious villain, Cornelius Sweers (a deputy under Colonel Flower), who was then imprisoned under a charge of peculation of public stores, and, whilst in durance, had accused the Colonel of frauds in his office, to gain favor for himself, the Board was ordered ‘*to arrest and confine Colonel Flower in jail.*’ *

“This was deemed by us unmilitary and hasty ; though we were ready to cause Flower, although we knew him to be innocent, to be arrested in the manner all officers, by the rules of military discipline, should be treated. All we wished was, to give Congress the opportunity of reconsidering the matter as to the *mode* of inquiry into his conduct. Arnold ordered a Court of Inquiry, or Court Martial ; I forget which.† But the result was, that Flower was most honorably and justly acquitted. Sweers was tried under State authority, and found guilty, and punished by fine, *pillory*, and imprisonment, on sundry charges. Both trials were fairly, carefully, and ably conducted, and our views of the business thus indisputably confirmed and appreciated. How the word ‘*atonement*’ crept into the closing resolution of Congress, I cannot account. There was nothing in our letters to warrant the expression,‡ and the ultimate issue fully justified us. We lamented, more than anything relating to ourselves, that Congress had been induced, by a too ardent zeal for punishing breaches of duty, to proceed rigorously and unjustifiably against a meritorious, and, to us, an essentially useful officer, whose conduct was immediately and constantly under our observation ; and that without even the oath of the unworthy accuser. See old Journal for August, 1778, p. 439.

* “To arrest and *safely keep*” were the terms of the order as adopted ; confinement *in jail* was proposed in previous motions. — *Journals of Congress*, Vol. IV. pp. 439, 440.

† According to Colonel Pickering’s letter of August 18th, 1778 (page 226), the investigation was made by committees of Congress.

‡ The reader of the second letter from the Board may perhaps dissent from this opinion. See page 223.

“There is not one of the members mentioned in the Secret Journal of yeas and nays as voting on the several questions — in all twenty-five — now alive. So that we are left without contemporary witnesses; and the proceedings of the Court Martial, or Inquiry, are burnt. I think it is incumbent on us to place, somewhere, a full explanation of the whole matter, as the Secret Journal is now published to the world. I always understood, and was so informed by several of the members, that the whole proceedings had been obliterated by Congress.

“I have called to your recollection this antiquated transaction, of forty-five years of age, that you may advise what is best to be done. At least we should leave with our friends or families, to guard against misrepresentations hereafter, some authentic account of a business which now appears in the Secret Journals unmeritedly to reflect on our conduct. Would it be advisable to publish anything, and what, about it? I did not wish to publish without consulting you. This letter contains all I could say or write on the subject.

“With a sincere esteem, older than this unnecessarily revived little tornado, always affectionately yours,

“RICHARD PETERS.”

Colonel Pickering, doubtless not recollecting that copies of the letters to Congress were among his own papers, wrote, in answer to Mr. Peters, on the 21st of October, 1823: —

“Your statement of the affair brings to my recollection the substance of the transaction; and if you will take the trouble to make a formal one, to leave, by duplicate, in the hands of our children, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, we will both sign it. Send me yours, signed by you, which I will sign and keep. I will make out the duplicate, sign and send it to you for the same purpose. This is agreeable to your own intimation, at the close of your letter, and better, in

my present view, than any publication. An *extremely small number* of persons will ever see the Journals; and, if some malevolent creature . . . should give publicity to the Flower affair, our declaration under our hands, to explain and justify our conduct, may then be made public, either by ourselves or our posterity, as the case may be.

“P. S. Our reasons for not arresting Flower, as ordered, will be an essential part of your statement. I do not remember ever to have signed a letter, ‘By order of the Board,’ as *President*.* If I wrote a letter, I signed it; and you signed yours.”

To this Judge Peters replied, under date of the 2d of November, saying he would prepare a statement.

“I will do it the first moment of leisure; and in the mean time you can file my letter to you, which contains all I can say on the subject. Some such explanation, most assuredly, we should leave in our families; and, if we should be compelled by malevolence or gossiping historiographers to publish anything, this statement may be at hand for the purpose. I rejoice that my career has been such, that, either from good luck, or want of consequence in political affairs, I have been very much exempted from the necessity of public controversies. I believe the true reason is, that I stand in nobody’s way.”

* Of more than forty letters from the Board of War, signed by Colonel Pickering, of which I have copies, not one has the addition of “President,” except the offending letter about Colonel Flower.

CHAPTER XV.

Reception of Gérard, the French Minister. — Colonel Pickering's Father. — Steuben's Infantry Regulations. — General Sullivan's Complaints of the Board of War. — Salaries of the Members of the Board. — Depreciated Currency. — Colonel Pickering's Frugality. — The Office of a Judge in Massachusetts proposed to him. — His intention to be a Commission Merchant.

THE following extract not only evinces Colonel Pickering's full belief in the maintenance of the independence of the United States, but contains confident predictions of important results from their success in the war, which have not all been realized. It is taken from a letter to his wife, dated Philadelphia, August 7th, 1778.

“Must not superior beings be struck with amazement when they behold rational creatures, endowed, too, with all the qualities requisite to form the kindest and most friendly societies, shedding, with savage fury, each other's blood? And for what? To possess a few dirty acres, or sordid gold; or, perhaps, only for the pleasure of domineering. The latter seems now to be almost the only motive which induces haughty Britain madly to continue the cruel war which her avarice first began. Though conscious that our independence is irrevocably fixed, she is too proud to acknowledge it. She must now yield up more. The United States will not make peace until Canada, Nova Scotia, and the two Floridas are also recovered to freedom and independence, and a free fishery secured to New England. Britain has long been the tyrant of the ocean — an element which Heaven designed for the equal and common

use of every nation. She will not, I presume, long maintain her exclusive dominion over it; and, among the nations, the rising States of America will claim an equal right to traverse every part of it uncontrolled. . . . She did not want advisers, who saw and pointed her to her true interest; but her full-blown pride would not suffer her to embrace it by doing only justice to the people she despised."

In the same letter is this anecdote:—

"Yesterday the *Sieur Gérard*, Minister Plenipotentiary from the court of France, had a public audience in Congress. The letter of credence from Lewis [Louis XVI.] was read. The Minister was then presented to the President [Laurens] and members, as the person referred to in the King's letter. He then addressed the President and members in a prepared speech in French, to which the President replied in a written speech in English. He then withdrew. The matter was conducted with dignity and propriety. The President was so affected with the solemnity, that before he had finished his speech he was seized with a general tremor, [so] that he had some trouble to get through it."

In a letter dated Philadelphia, September 11th, 1778, to his wife, Colonel Pickering recurs to the death and character of his father. He also mentions his proposed domestic arrangements, and some of the expenses of living in that city. From the prices of board paid by the members of Congress (twenty dollars a week, and at one house thirty), it seems that they were made to pay for their official dignity, as well as for their food and lodging.

"Last Monday I had the pleasure of receiving your favor of the 19th of June. . . . This letter repeated the account of my father's death, which I before heard from Mr.

Williams. There were in this case all the consolations friends could have wished for. He doubtless exchanged this life for a better, and in his last moments could look back with pleasure on a long life spent in the fear and service of God. His peculiarities rather deserve respect, because they were dictated by an upright heart, and were deemed erroneous only because they did not coincide with the *practices* or *fashions* of the world, which ever was, and is, too corrupt to be governed by principles founded solely on *love to God* and *love to man*. . . . By next Monday's post I hope to receive your answer to my letter on the subject of your coming hither with me in the fall. In one written lately I informed you that I had rented a house. . . . I hope you have concluded to accompany me hither, for every reason we can think of, except the separation from our friends. . . . As to the mode of conveyance, I think it not very difficult. The mode of travelling here formerly was in stage-wagons, similar to that Captain Nichols goes home in. I have told him I may want it to bring my family hither, and he has engaged to keep it till I get home, and to give me the refusal of it. You may think it will be hard riding in such a carriage; but the middle seat is not bad. Besides, I will get the seats fixed on springs, which will make them easy enough. But if any other mode of conveyance presents, and more agreeable to you, I shall certainly prefer it."

The manuscript of Baron Steuben's "Regulations for the Infantry of the United States" having been submitted to General Washington's examination, he wrote* to the Baron:—

"One precaution is rendered necessary by your writing in a foreign tongue, which is, to have the whole revised and prepared for the press by some person who will give

* February 26th, 1779.

it perspicuity and correctness of diction, without deviating from the appropriate terms and language of military science."

Colonel Pickering having formerly published a work of a similar nature, and being habitually attentive to precision in his own compositions, was well qualified to perform this service; and, according to Mr. Sparks,* he "superintended the publication of the first edition, bestowed a good deal of pains to have it brought out accurately, and probably revised and corrected the manuscript for the press." Colonel Pickering, by order of the Board of War, wrote to the President of Congress, March 27th, 1779: —

"The Baron Steuben, Inspector-General, having formed a system of exercise and discipline for the infantry of the United States, has delivered the same to this Board, with a request that we would present the same to Congress. This we have now the honor of doing. General Washington's remarks have been incorporated in the work. It has been examined with attention by the Board, and is highly approved, as being calculated to produce important advantages to the States. We beg leave to join the Baron in praying it may, as soon as possible, have the sanction of Congress, that it may be committed to the press with that expedition which the advanced season of the year requires."

In a friendly letter dated "Camp, Smith's Clove, New York, June 12th, 1779," the Baron thus acknowledges the aid he had received from Colonel Pickering: —

"DEAR COLONEL,

"When I write to the Board of War to complain of their not granting me the assistance I expected from them in my

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VI. 177, and note.

operations, it is not to my friend Mr. Pickering or my friend Mr. Peters I write. I regard and esteem you equally, both; and I expect, from your good nature, that you will not find fault with my laying before the Honorable Board the unhappy circumstance in which I find myself, which reduces me almost to despair.

“I do beg, my dear Colonel, you will lend me all the assistance in your power, that I may have, without delay, the necessary copies. I know I have already given you a considerable deal of trouble; I am perfectly sensible that you have taken all possible pains for the correction of that work, without which the undertaking would never have succeeded. To your kind assistance, and that of Captain Walker, the Regulations owe their existence; you have it in your power to have them soon reduced into practice.

“Our affairs are now in a more critical situation than ever. I wish we may make up by good order for what we want in strength, and our triumph will be the more glorious.”

The inability of the Board of War to meet all the demands on the part of officers in the army subjected the Board at times to undeserved censure. General Sullivan, who had command of the expedition against the Indians of the Six Nations, and had made a call upon the Board for large quantities of clothing and other supplies, complained to Congress that they had not been furnished. This drew forth a letter, of August 4th, 1779, from Colonel Pickering to Congress, in behalf of the Board, in which he detailed the requisitions made by General Sullivan, and stated how far the Board had complied with them. Towards the end of the letter, he says:—

“ [General Sullivan] has now made a demand of one thousand blankets and five thousand shirts, which, at present, 'tis not possible to comply with. Could we have formed

any certain judgment of the quantity of clothing requisite for General Sullivan's army, we should have spared no pains to supply it; but all his information was very general: we had complied with every requisition from the Commander-in-Chief, and were for a long time utterly ignorant of the corps destined for the Indian expedition, excepting those three before named. Moreover, General Sullivan's demands being usually on a large scale, we deemed some caution necessary in granting him supplies. He asked for one thousand spare muskets at a time we had but a single one in store. We communicated the matter to General Washington, at the same time informing him, that we had some time before ordered two hundred stands of spare arms and accoutrements complete for the troops under General Sullivan; and these his Excellency, in his answer, judged adequate to the service. From this view of the matter we humbly conceive it will appear, that the Board were not in fault, if General Sullivan has not been supplied with the necessary clothing for the troops under his command."

Besides complaining to Congress, Sullivan issued a general order at Wyoming, on the 21st of July (which had not been seen by Colonel Pickering when he wrote the preceding letter), saying:—

"The Commander-in-Chief [Sullivan] acquaints the army, that, had the Board of War complied with his requisitions, and even their own engagements, respecting clothing, the numerous brave and virtuous soldiers at this post would not now be suffering through want of any articles in that way. Although he has been disappointed from time to time, and has almost despaired of receiving suitable supplies, yet, from late advice, he promises himself the satisfaction of relieving the absolute necessities of the troops before they move from hence."

On a copy of this order Mr. Peters made a note: "The Board never made a single engagement on the subject with General Sullivan."

By a letter from Mr. Peters, on behalf of the Board, to General Washington, it would seem that Washington had been addressed by them on the subject of Sullivan's complaints.

“WAR OFFICE, August 28th, 1779.

“We have been honored with your Excellency's favors of the 21st. . . . We return your Excellency our warmest acknowledgments for the candid and decisive account you have given to Congress of the charge made by General Sullivan on the subject of clothing. We shall think ourselves fortunate, if calumny must fall on us, to have it, ever, so clearly in our power to exculpate ourselves. And, while any part of our conduct falling under your Excellency's observation meets with your favorable sentiments, we with much sincerity declare there are very few quarters from whence censure can wound our feelings. Your sentiments on the necessity of cultivating harmony among persons engaged in the same pursuit — the interest and safety of our country — are perfectly in unison with our opinions and conduct. Had your constant example been followed by General Sullivan, no trouble would have arisen on the present occasion. He has sent us a copy of the order we complained of, and still insists on its propriety. His letter accompanying the copy is so full of forced constructions and uncandid comments on our letters, with such ungenteel and insulting insinuations superadded thereto, that we see little prospect of his doing us the least justice. We believe, however, that we shall put an end to the controversy with him by taking no further notice of his letter, which we cannot answer without descending into paths we feel ourselves above treading. We will leave it to time to undeceive the army, whose good opinion we are really, on all occasions, anxious of possessing. We have neither leisure nor inclination for personal controversies.” . . .

The Board, nevertheless, sent a letter* to Congress,

* Of August 31st. See Journals of Congress, September 1st, 1779.

enclosing a copy of the general order issued by General Sullivan, and "representing that the characters of the Board are made very free with in General Sullivan's army, who, being under a deception, censure the members with great bitterness; and thereupon requesting the favor of Congress to appoint a committee to examine into their conduct and proceedings on this subject."* A committee was appointed accordingly; but, in January, 1781, when it was proposed to supersede the Board of War by a Secretary of War, and General Sullivan, Colonel Pickering, and Mr. Peters were named as candidates for the office, Mr. Peters, writing to Colonel Pickering, said:—

"Sullivan is doing you and me (particularly Pillgarlic) ill offices on the score of the old complaint, in which Congress left our letter undecided upon." †

The following letter from the Rev. John Clarke, which contains an interesting statement respecting the situation of the inhabitants of Boston, furnishes evidence of Colonel Pickering's industry and of his hopeful disposition:—

"BOSTON, October 21st, 1779.

"HONORED SIR,

"Your faithful Millet spent the last evening with me, and let me into a perfect acquaintance with your hopes, prospects, and affairs. . . . Your friends in these parts are

* Journals of Congress, September 1st, 1779, Vol. V. p. 332.

† In Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution" (Vol. I. p. 272, note 1), it is said that General Sullivan, having offended some of the members of the Board of War; and believing himself ill treated, resigned his commission in 1779. In the Journals of Congress for November 13th and 30th, 1779 (Vol. V. pp. 410, 440), his ill state of health is assigned as the ground of his resignation. See also Hildreth's "History of the United States," First Series, Vol. III. p. 289.

extremely anxious about your situation. My mother, in especial, is very apprehensive you will ruin your constitution by a too close attendance upon your public office. O, Sir, give their fears a proper consideration. *Live* to make your amiable consort, to make them, to make us all, happy.

"In Boston we are much alarmed by the last accounts from Philadelphia.* Some are not a little apprehensive that a like tragedy may be acted upon this stage. But I cannot say I suffer much from that quarter. It appears to me we are in a far more likely way of being starved; for I doubt whether Egypt, during the seven years of famine, was in greater distress than this unhappy town. We can procure nothing, Sir, for money; barter is the only method of commerce which now prevails. You will therefore readily believe that the circumstances of such as have neither salt, sugar, &c., beggar all description. It is my firm belief, that we are the wretchedest people under heaven. We have depraved every virtuous principle, and, was Britain to remove her troops and leave us to our independence, it seems to me we should be incapable of enjoying it. Think not, Sir, I am now raving in the language of my profession. Nothing, I am sensible, is more unamiable than such a business; but, when I take a view of that base principle which actuates so great a part of my countrymen, when I behold such wicked pains taken to elude the most salutary measures, I see, I feel, too much to speak upon the subject with any tolerable composure. But *you* will not be disturbed by anything I advance. 'Tis your maxim, I well know, *Nil desperandum*; and Heaven grant it may be to you according to your faith. While you are engaged in affairs of state, I am no less industrious in my sacred employment. My passion for it daily increases. New truths are continually breaking in upon me.

"Your obliged nephew,

"JOHN CLARKE."

* Of a riot, in which three persons were killed. See Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," Vol. I. p. 321.

Some of the inconveniences suffered by Colonel Pickering, and the frugality he was compelled to practise, resulting from the depreciation of the currency, are set forth in his letter to a committee of Congress, as follows :—

“WAR OFFICE [Philadelphia], November 22d, 1779.

“GENTLEMEN,

“Your notification to the officers of the Board of War to attend the committee appointed to consider what allowances shall be made for their past services, has been handed to me ; but, instead of a personal attendance, I beg your permission to state in writing what I might say in the matter. In October, 1778, Congress were pleased to increase the salaries of Mr. Peters and me from two thousand to four thousand dollars, assigning as a reason of that increase, that our situation exposed us to extraordinary expenses, particularly for company.* This addition to our salaries was made on my representation of the necessity of my being supported, if I continued in the office ; and I then imagined (living with the frugality to which I had been accustomed, and money not depreciating) it would have been barely sufficient for the purpose, though I am now convinced it would have fallen short even of that. But I have, in fact, expended upwards of fourteen thousand dollars for the mere support of my family the year past ; and the expense would have been much greater, had I not early, while prices were low, laid in stocks of some necessary articles sufficient to bring the year about, and at the same time purchased very little clothing ; for in the whole year I have not expended in this article, for my whole family, as much as would now buy me a plain suit. But, to prevent a further accumulation of expense, which I was not sure would be reimbursed, and which otherwise I could not bear, I have done more. I have denied myself numerous common gratifications. I have not, for a good while past, kept even

* Journals of Congress, October 16th, Vol. IV. p. 599.

a single horse ; and I have often, to my great mortification, deprived myself of the pleasure of company. In regard to the salary proposed for the Commissioners of the War Office for the current year,* it is a trifle compared even with the last year's grant. That would not have supported a family small as mine, even with my habitual frugality ; but the necessities of life are now, upon an average, at least ten times dearer than they were a year ago, when that grant was made ; and how it is expected we can exist on the present grant, and with an increasing depreciation of money, I am not able to conjecture. Our family expenses are necessarily greater ; and, for my own part, I must buy *some* clothing, for my old clothes I have already worn on both sides. I am also obliged to give four thousand dollars for the current year's rent of the indifferent house I occupy, and must increase that sum in proportion to the depreciation of the money. From these facts the committee will be able to judge what sum will be necessary to make good the deficiency of my salary for time past. A year ago, when I had the honor of addressing Congress on the subject of my pay, I informed them my circumstances demanded, that, whatever business I pursued, it must support me ; and that if, in the service of the public, I could not obtain such support, I must abandon it. The consequent Act of Congress imported, I thought, an engagement to yield me such support. Had I not thus conceived of the matter, I should then have quitted the office ; especially, I should not have brought my family four hundred miles from home, at the hazard of starving them. I can form no idea of the principle on which the salary proposed for the current year was estimated. If its manifest insufficiency was intended to be remedied at the year's end, it had been better (I humbly conceive) to have let the old salary remain ; but the making an addition to it, joined with the subsequent declaration, that, if the money appreciates, the salary is to be proportionally lowered, leads

* Fourteen thousand dollars. See Journals of Congress, November 12th, 1779, Vol. V. p. 409.

me to suppose that the grant of fourteen thousand dollars was deemed adequate to the expenses of the current year, taking prices as they now are. But, after the facts already stated, I need not observe how far it must fall short. Yet I have not a wish to live luxuriously; I have not been used to it. No man can content himself easier than I with the utmost simplicity of living. It has long and often pained me, that our manners, for two or three years past, have been so totally opposite to it. But to these prevailing manners I must, in some small degree, conform, or quit a public station. I am aware of the public embarrassments on account of the currency, and that many, like ourselves, are suffering in the public service; and, were public virtue generally apparent, as at the beginning of the contest, we would with pleasure devote our time and all we possess to the public service, nor ask a recompense. But, while some servants of the public are amassing fortunes, and all ranks of people pursuing, with so much avidity, only their private gain, we are unwilling, for their sakes, to reduce ourselves to beggary. In respect to the relative amount of our salaries, I shall say nothing, after reading what Mr. Peters has suggested on that head. His ideas appear to me perfectly just.*

Mr. Williams, a brother-in-law of Colonel Pickering, wrote to him, December 12th, 1779, that Judge Sulli-

* In a letter, dated Philadelphia, December 13th, 1779, to his brother, Colonel Pickering says, "The price of a pair of man's shoes is a hundred dollars;" flour is "from ninety to a hundred pounds [per cwt.]; beef, twenty-two shillings and six pence [per pound] by the quarter or side; pork, twenty-five to thirty shillings [per pound.]; . . . salt, seventy-five pounds per bushel; rum, twenty-five pounds [per gallon]; sugar, one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds [per cwt.]; Indian corn, from twelve to fifteen pounds [per bushel]." At that time a dollar in specie was worth about twenty-six dollars in Continental currency.† In September, 1780, the salary of the Commissioners of the Board of War was fixed at eighteen hundred and fifty dollars, to be paid in specie or other current money equivalent (*Journals of Congress*, September 13th); and by a subsequent resolve, it was to "have retrospect from that day to the 2d of November, 1778." (*Ibid.*, November 15th, 1780.)

† Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," Vol. I. p. 319, note 2.

van said he wished Colonel Pickering was at home, as he was talked of to fill a vacant seat on the bench of the Superior (now called Supreme) Court of Massachusetts, and that his brother, John Pickering, believed he would have the offer of it if he were present.

In his answer to Mr. Williams, dated Philadelphia, January 6th, 1780, he says:—

“I chose to put by itself what I have to say relative to the important vacant office you mention. I really cannot tell why I should have been thought of to fill it, as my knowledge of the law is very small, and I cannot boast of abilities. . . . Perhaps an opinion of my integrity might have been the principal cause. Indeed, the knowledge I have of the law (small as it is) would enable me to pursue the study of it with more facility, were I to devote myself to it; but, setting this aside, I know not why brother John should not have the preference. There is no man more upright; and on all occasions I discover in him the obvious marks of an understanding and penetration superior to mine. I should, therefore, be well pleased to see him raised to the vacant seat. It will probably be an office for life; and, whatever may be the case now, it will doubtless hereafter yield a man a decent or genteel maintenance. But is anything more to be expected? If not, it might satisfy brother John;* but would it enable me to leave anything to my children? The fear that it would not is an argument against my accepting of it, and, indeed, my principal objection; for, if I were in the station, by devoting my attention to it I should hope to render myself not altogether unqualified for it. I consider it as a most honorable, as well as important office. In this view it is flattering to a man's ambition, and I know not any man wholly destitute of that passion; which is, indeed, a necessary one, implanted in us by our Creator, as a spur to the best and noblest actions.”

* Being a bachelor.

After a request that his friends would weigh the advantages of the proposed office with those of a scheme, which he had long contemplated, of going into business at Philadelphia as a commission merchant on the conclusion of the war, and after remarking, that, in general, but small salaries were attached to civil offices, he proceeds :—

“I recollect, indeed, that about 1774 the General Court, by a kind of compulsion, raised the salaries of the Superior Court judges to a sum tolerably handsome, to prevent Great Britain doing it; but may a generous allowance be expected now? . . . I may add, that the Continental War Office will probably be continued, which will yield something clever to the holders of it; but, on the other hand, it is not improbable (as the members are annually elected), that, at the end of the war, some deserving general officers may constitute the Board, to the exclusion of the present members. I, therefore, on the plan of remaining here, reckon very little on that office, and place my dependence on the commission business. I have delivered my sentiments with frankness, and I expect yours and my friends’ will be given me with equal freedom.

“P. S. I forgot to mention that the salary voted to each member of the Board of War, for the year to come, is fourteen thousand dollars, which will not half support me. I expect Congress will add about ten thousand dollars to the last year’s salary, which, with all my economy, will but about clear off my last year’s score of expenses in this expensive place. In October, 1778, the four thousand dollars then voted me would buy more than fourteen thousand dollars now.* Congress lately voted, that about the 1st of May they would remove from this city, and on the first Monday of January were to agree on what place they would

* See Journals of Congress, October 16th, 1778 (Vol. IV. p. 599), and November 12th, 1779 (Vol. V. p. 409).

remove to ; but the consideration of it is postponed for a month or two. Hartford, Burlington, Fredericktown, in Maryland, and Fredericksburg in Virginia, are talked of as proper places ; but I much doubt whether Congress will move at all. Should they move, I feel little inclination to follow them to either of the places, as it would so much interfere with my commercial plan."

In a letter of June 6th, 1780, Mr. Williams observes, that in former days the salary of a judge of the Superior Court was two hundred pounds (six hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty-seven cents), but what it would be under the new Constitution was uncertain ; and that probably an appointment would not be made until October.

During the greater part of the years 1779 and 1780, in which the Board of War held its sessions in Philadelphia, Colonel Pickering was employed by some of his Massachusetts friends to act in their behalf in procuring the condemnation and sale of several prizes sent in to that city by their privateers.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Quartermaster-General's Department newly arranged. — General Greene resigns the Office. — Colonel Pickering appointed in his Place. — The Office embarrassed by the Want of Money. — He obtains Authority to issue Specie Certificates.

ON the 20th of January, 1780, Congress passed a resolve, that "three commissioners, one of whom to be a member of Congress, be appointed to inquire into the expenses of the staff departments, and the means of retrenching the same; . . . and that they report such arrangements in all or any of the said departments as they may judge expedient." General Schuyler, General Mifflin, and Colonel Pickering were chosen to be the commissioners.* Subsequently a resolve was passed, that Congress return their thanks to General Mifflin and Colonel Pickering for their attention to the business committed to them, manifested in their plan for the arrangement of the staff departments; and the report of the commissioners was referred to a committee, who were to consult with the Commander-in-Chief and the heads of the staff departments on the same, and such alterations as the circumstances of the army might render necessary.† What alterations were made by the committee does not appear; but the plan for conducting the Quartermaster's department, as revised by them, was adopted by Congress on the 15th of July. General Greene, at that time the Quarter-

* Journals of Congress, January 20th, 21st, and 22d, 1780, Vol. VI. pp. 29, 30.

† Ibid., p. 120, April 14th.

master-General, was so much dissatisfied with the new arrangement, that in consequence he resigned his office. In his letter of resignation * to Congress he says : —

“However willing I might have been heretofore to subject myself to the fatigue and difficulties attending the duties of this office, justice to myself, as well as to the public, constrains me positively to decline it under the present arrangement, as I do not choose to attempt an experiment of so dangerous a nature, where I see a physical impossibility of performing the duties that will be required of me. . . .

“It is unnecessary for me to go into the general objections I have to the plan. It is sufficient to say, that my feelings are injured, and that the officers necessary to conduct the business are not allowed. Nor is proper provision made for some of those that are. . . . Whoever has the least knowledge of the business in this office, and the field duty which is to be done, must be fully convinced, that it is impossible to perform it without much more assistance than is allowed in the present arrangement.”

And to Washington he wrote:†—

“The principal characters on whom I depended are left out, and many parts of the plan it is impossible to reduce to practice. . . . When I take a view of the religious and political prejudices that have frequently influenced public bodies, at different periods, to adopt the most ruinous measures, I am not surprised to see an attempt to change a system of one of the most important departments of the army, in the most critical and interesting season of the campaign, and when every exertion under the best direction is incompetent to the demands of the service.”

* Of July 26th, 1780. See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VII. p. 512.

† Ibid., p. 514, July 27th, 1780.

This office, thus encompassed by difficulties which General Greene, with his brilliant talents and indomitable energy and industry, was unwilling to encounter, was proposed by Roger Sherman, a member of Congress, to Colonel Pickering for his acceptance; and Mr. Sherman parted from him with the understanding that he would not decline the appointment.

On the 5th of August, 1780, Congress passed the following resolutions:—

“Resolved, That the absolute refusal of Major-General Greene, at this important crisis, to act under the new arrangement of the Quartermaster-General’s department, has made it necessary that the office of Quartermaster-General be immediately filled.

“Resolved, unanimously, That Congress proceed to the election of a Quartermaster-General.

“Congress accordingly proceeded, and, the ballots being taken, Timothy Pickering was elected.*

“Resolved, That Timothy Pickering, Esquire, having been appointed Quartermaster-General upon an extraordinary emergency, be continued as a member of the Board of War; but that the exercise of all his powers at the said Board, and his pay as a member thereof, be suspended during such time as he shall continue Quartermaster-General.

“That, while he holds the office of Quartermaster-General, he have the rank of colonel, and the pay and rations of a brigadier-general, over and above the pay allowed the Quartermaster-General in the late [new] arrangement of the Quartermaster’s department.” †

* Unanimously.

† Journals of Congress, August 5th, 1780, Vol. VI. pp. 154, 155. The pay of Quartermaster-General was one hundred and sixty-six dollars a month; of Brigadier-General, one hundred and twenty-five dollars; and the rations for a year were estimated (Journals of Congress, March 14th, 1782) at nine hundred and four dollars; making Colonel Pickering’s whole compensation to be at the rate of forty-three hundred and ninety-six dollars a year. He was also supplied with forage for his horses.

The appointment having been made on the 5th of August, the following letter to Mr. Sherman was probably misdated the 6th. Some expressions in it seem to indicate that Colonel Pickering had seen General Greene's letter to Congress.

"SIR,

"When we parted this morning, it was, I suppose, on your part, with an expectation that, if Congress should think proper to appoint me Quartermaster-General, I should not decline accepting the office. But I beg leave to inform you, that, on a further consideration of the matter, I feel exceedingly embarrassed. In whatever light the department is viewed at this time, numerous difficulties present themselves. 'Tis in the midst of a campaign, and a campaign which may be deemed the most important since the commencement of the war. 'Tis a campaign for which but partial provision has been made; and the state of the public finances almost forbids the hope that deficiencies will be fully supplied. The late Quartermaster-General has stood high in the opinion and favor of the army: I cannot pretend to equal abilities or approbation. I have no rank in the army; and yet without rank the Quartermaster-General might not have that weight the duties of his office will demand. Having adopted a new plan for the department, Congress will doubtless expect a reformation conformable to it; but the practicability of such reformation, in this stage of the campaign, may be doubted.

"Under these circumstances it would be with the utmost concern I should accept the proposed appointment; and, independent of them, I would choose to remain where I am. Yet I am not disposed to shrink from difficult services, where it appears to be my duty and I possess ability to encounter them; but on the present occasion I wish to be excused, unless my acceptance of the office will relieve Congress from embarrassments absolutely not otherwise to be overcome."

FROM SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

“PHILADELPHIA, August 5th, 1780.

“SIR,

“Enclosed you will receive an act of Congress of this day, by which you will be informed that General Greene has refused to act as Quartermaster-General under the new arrangement of that department, and that you are elected Quartermaster-General. I am persuaded, that in this critical conjuncture the cause of our country will overrule every other consideration, and incline you to accept this appointment, and undertake the important service without delay.

“Congress being under the necessity of making a new appointment, their minds have unanimously fixed upon you.” . . .

The President then states the substance of some of the resolves above quoted.

Colonel Pickering, induced, as he said, “by a kind of political necessity,” accepted the appointment, and wrote the following letter to the President of Congress:—

“WAR OFFICE, August 7th, 1780.

“SIR,

“I received yesterday your favor of the 5th instant, enclosing an act of Congress appointing me Quartermaster-General. I will not decline the appointment, though it be as opposite to my wishes as beside my expectation. It is indeed a very honorable appointment, that demands my grateful acknowledgments; and it is rendered still more honorable by the manner and circumstances in which it was made: but, under the present numerous and peculiar embarrassments of the office, I fear it would be difficult for much greater abilities than mine to acquire honor in the execution of it. The public in general may not distinguish between defects arising from the singular circumstances of our affairs and those which result from negligence and mismanagement. Congress, however, will be more just, and

will permit me to rely on their candor for a favorable interpretation of my conduct in the execution of an office which, at any former and more happy period, I should have undertaken with reluctance, and which, at this time, promises only a constant succession of complicated difficulties and distress. Nor can I give any assurances of an adequate performance of the duties of Quartermaster-General, but only of a diligent exertion of such talents as I possess, and of which I wish Congress may not have entertained too favorable an opinion."

Joseph Jones, a member of Congress from Virginia, wrote to General Washington : —

"On Saturday Colonel Pickering was appointed to the office of Quartermaster-General. . . . This gentleman's integrity, ability, and attention to business, will, I hope, not only prevent the evils to be apprehended from a change in so important a department at this time, but will, I hope, be able to reform some of the abuses crept into that business, and lessen the amazing expenditures of the department. He must, if he accepts, have a disagreeable office in the present state of our finance; but we must support him all we can." *

Colonel Pickering gave notice of his appointment to General Washington, then at head-quarters at Orangetown, New York, in the following letter : —

"PHILADELPHIA, August 11th, 1780.

"SIR,

"You will doubtless, ere this reaches you, have been informed that Congress have been pleased to appoint me Quartermaster-General. This was so totally unexpected, that it will take me some days yet before I can get ready to proceed to camp. In the mean time I shall make some

* Sparks's "Correspondence of the Revolution," Vol. III. p. 53.

necessary arrangements for conducting the business of the department in this State and the other States southward of it. The gentlemen concerned in the department with the army will, I hope, cheerfully continue to exercise the duties of their respective offices until my arrival in camp, which shall be as speedily as possible."

On the 12th of August, a few days after his appointment to the office of Quartermaster-General, Colonel Pickering wrote to the President of Congress:—

"In order to prevent an interruption in the business of the Quartermaster-General's department, an immediate grant of at least one million of dollars* appears to me to be indispensable to pay for the transportation of stores and provisions, and to procure forage where the State supplies prove insufficient. It being impossible just now to collect the returns and information by which the state of the department may be precisely known, I cannot at this time make a particular estimate; but the demands which, for some time past, have been laid before the Board of War, convince me that a much larger sum than that above mentioned will very soon be necessary to continue the business of transportation and the purchase of forage and camp equipage; though, till I obtain further information, I request the grant only of one million of dollars.

"Congress, I hope, will pardon me for observing, that the public funds appear so inadequate to the large and constant demands made on them, that a competent supply of current money for the Quartermaster-General's department cannot soon be expected: at the same time, every substitute for current money hitherto provided seems, for a good while past, to have been received in payment with reluctance. Under these circumstances a measure has occurred to me, which I conceive will, in many instances, greatly relieve me,

* Equivalent to fourteen thousand two hundred and eighty-five dollars in specie; a Spanish dollar being then worth seventy of Continental paper money.

and which, therefore, I beg leave to mention. It is this, — that the Quartermaster-General be authorized, for all services performed or articles purchased in his department, for which any credit is given, to cause the prices thereof to be fixed in specie, and certificates given for the same to be paid in specie, or other money equivalent, at the times which shall therein be stipulated; and, if not then paid, that such certificates afterwards bear an interest at the rate of six per cent. per annum until paid.

“This measure, I apprehend, can work no injury to the States, and will do only simple justice to the public creditors. It is a measure from which I should hope to derive substantial benefits; while certificates in the usual form are held in such low estimation, that no good, but rather mischief by destroying the credit of the department, is to be expected from them.

“I am sorry, especially at such a time as this, to be obliged to request Congress to make me an advance of fifty thousand dollars * on my personal account; but I am obliged to purchase horses with their furniture, and almost every species of camp equipage, with necessary stores, before I can take the field; and, on a calculation I have made, a less sum will be insufficient.”

Congress, in accordance with the above highly-important suggestion, passed resolutions requiring that certificates issued in the Quartermaster's and Commissary's departments, for services performed or articles purchased within their respective departments, should be signed by the Quartermaster-General and Commissary-General respectively; should be “given for specie or other current money equivalent”; and should “bear an interest of six per cent. per annum from the time stipulated for payment until paid.” These certificates were called *specie certificates*, and proved eminently use-

* Equivalent to seven hundred and fourteen dollars in specie.

ful to Colonel Pickering in administering the affairs of his department.

On the 17th of September, just before leaving Philadelphia for the army, he again wrote to the President of Congress: —

“Sunday Morning.

“SIR,

“I would have done myself the honor of waiting on you before I left town, but for almost all last week I was too unwell to be abroad, especially in the evening, and the greater part of the time so ill that nothing but necessity would have induced me to do business. I am still indisposed and sore from a fall from my horse this day week; but shall, nevertheless, set out for camp immediately, with melancholy prospects indeed! when the treasury has been empty *forty days*, and it is expected by the army (which is in the greatest distress), that I shall go loaded with money. I have borrowed money to defray my expenses to camp. I am, Sir, with the greatest esteem,” &c.

Some incidents connected with his office are mentioned in the following extracts from his letters: —

TO MRS. PICKERING.

“TRENTON, September 19th, 1780.

“I have the pleasure to inform you, that I find myself much better in health than when I left Philadelphia; and, as my business required my resting here till now, I am so far confirmed as to proceed, I hope, without danger or pain; for Sunday’s journey was exceedingly uncomfortable, every step, after the first twelve miles, giving me much uneasiness.

“I have appointed a deputy for Jersey (Colonel John Neilson), whom the Governor highly approves, and who is well spoken of by everybody. From the short conversation I have had with him, I have good reason to be pleased my-

self. He appears to be just the man I would have wished for; and I persuade myself his conduct will justify my present ideas of his fitness for the office.” *

TO THE SAME.

“CAMP AT TAPPAN, September 27th.

“I have met everywhere a kind reception in the army. The General is not yet arrived. Arnold’s villany has occasioned his stay at West Point.”

TO HIS BROTHER.

“CAMP AT TOTOWA [or Totaway, near Passaic Falls], thirty-two miles north-east from Morristown, October 13th, 1780.

“I am extremely happy in your appointment of Colonel Hatch [as Deputy Quartermaster-General], whom indeed I do not know, but who, I find, sustains an excellent character, as perfectly upright, and possessing talents peculiarly adapted for the employment.†

“I have found less embarrassment in the office [of Quartermaster-General] than I expected. The total want of money (of which I have not yet received a farthing) is the occasion of almost every difficulty I have to encounter.”

TO MRS. PICKERING.

“CAMP TOTOWA, October 18th, 1780.

“My condition is singularly hard. The very money I borrowed in Philadelphia to defray my own expenses, I have been obliged to distribute to the expresses when ordered to one place and another with public despatches! besides near ten thousand dollars I before advanced for public services.”

* Colonel Neilson performed the duties of the office, to the end of the war, in a very satisfactory manner.

† Colonel Pickering sent a warrant signed in blank to his brother, who inserted in it the name of Colonel Hatch. Hatch’s conduct in the office justified the appointment.

The value of this apparently large sum may be estimated, in a degree, from a fact mentioned in the same letter: "Yesterday I purchased a horse of Mr. Peabody for twelve thousand dollars." *

* In August, September, and October, one dollar in specie was worth, respectively, seventy, seventy-one, and seventy-two dollars in Continental currency. See Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," Vol. I. p. 319.

CHAPTER XVII.

Failure of an Enterprise against the British on Staten Island attributed to Colonel Pickering. — His Vindication. — His Satisfaction in his Office. — Publication of Intercepted Letters of Members of Congress and Others. — Rivington's "Royal Gazette." — Correspondence between Colonel Pickering and Colonel Hugh Hughes. — Colonel Pickering's Domestic Arrangements. — Disinterestedness of Officers in the American Army.

IN the year 1808, when Colonel Pickering's opposition to the embargo law had made it an object with the Democratic party to lessen his political influence, the failure of an enterprise, in 1780, against the British on Staten Island, was alleged to have been owing to misconduct on his part. This accusation drew from him the following vindication, published in the "Salem Gazette": —

"The 'Essex Register' of the 13th instant has been put into my hands. In it is a piece from the 'Charleston City Gazette,' headed '*Fidelity and Gallantry of Colonel Pickering in the Campaign of 1780,*' stating the failure of an enterprise against a British post on Staten Island to have arisen from a want of fidelity and gallantry in me. In your 'Gazette' of the 16th I observe the same piece republished, with several remarks subjoined for my vindication. The reflections of the candid and intelligent editor of the 'Norfolk Ledger' are alike obvious and just. Had *cowardice* or a want of *fidelity* in the affair spoken of been manifested, it is impossible that General Washington should have allowed me to retain the important office of Quartermaster-General, which I then held, and which I continued to hold to the

close of the American war. I may add, that, if there had been any room even to suspect my fidelity, that real patriot and upright man would not afterwards voluntarily have conferred on me several very important trusts and offices; I say *voluntarily*; for, of all those trusts and offices, never one was asked for by me. If any of my friends requested them, or any of them, in my behalf, it was, and is, to me wholly unknown.*

“Another writer, with a warmth of zeal to vindicate a much injured man, has done it on the ground that no such expedition as that mentioned in the ‘Charleston City Gazette’ had been undertaken in 1780. This is a mistake. Such an expedition was projected, but with secrecy; and, failing in the execution, its object could not be generally known; and hence, probably, this writer has fallen into this mistake. Against what post the expedition was intended, I do not recollect; but access to it was to be gained by water. The facts were simply these:—

“I had recently joined the army as Quartermaster-General. The *boats* attached to the army, like the *wagons*, were under the *general direction* of that department. The repairs of both pertained to the *corps of artificers* of that department. The late Colonel Baldwin, of Brookfield, commanded that corps. He had just reported to me the condition of the boats—that they were ready for service—and that the wagon-carriages, on which the boats were mounted, being furnished with *double-trees*, none need be carried by the wagoners with their horses. The boats were at some distance from the army. The only duty incumbent on *me* was to give, in the proper time, the requisite orders to the

* This statement is repeated elsewhere by Colonel Pickering; but, as in other instances, his memory was here at fault. He did ask, in September, 1790, for the office of Postmaster-General. It was given to him in August, 1791, without a repetition of the request. It was then an inferior office, having a salary of only fifteen hundred dollars, and not entitling him to a seat in the Cabinet. But his argument is sustained by the facts, that the office of Secretary of War was conferred on him voluntarily, and that of Secretary of State almost forced upon him, by President Washington.

Wagonmaster-General to transport them. And, in doing this, I repeated the words of Colonel Baldwin respecting the *double-trees*. Unfortunately, either Colonel Baldwin mistook the fact as to the double-trees, or they had been taken away without his knowledge. Consequently, when the horses with their drivers reached the boats, they could not be moved; the double-trees being the movable bars across the tongues of wagon-carriages to which the horses, by their traces and swingletrees (whippletrees), are attached.

“That this trivial accident relative to the double-trees occasioned a disappointment to the Commander-in-Chief, to Lafayette, and to others acquainted with the object of the enterprise, there can be no doubt. I perfectly remember stating the facts immediately at head-quarters to Colonel Hamilton, principal aide-de-camp to General Washington; whose answer was, that the General attached no blame to me. And, from that time until the publication in the ‘Essex Register’ (one of the common sewers of lies and slanders), I do not recollect to have seen or heard one word concerning it.

“In this affair there was no room to display or to withhold ‘gallantry’ on the part of the Quartermaster-General; and, if there had been any want of ‘fidelity,’ he would have been tried, and, by the sentence of a court-martial, adequately punished.

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.

“SALEM, August 18th, 1808.”

The following contemporaneous letter from Colonel Pickering, which probably he had forgotten, and which undoubtedly relates to the expedition above mentioned, shows, instead of a want of fidelity, that, besides performing his simple duty of issuing his orders, he was earnest and active in his endeavors to have them promptly carried into effect.

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"CAMP AT TOTOWA, October 28th, 1780.

"SIR,

"Sensible how mortifying is disappointment, especially when the object of our wishes is almost within our grasp; aware that the supposed cause of the disappointment is ever the subject of censure and resentment; and fearing your Excellency will deem me greatly culpable for the failure of the late enterprise of the light infantry, — I beg you will do me the favor to read the orders I gave on the occasion, copies of which I enclose. Each was given on the instant of receiving from Colonel Hamilton his several communications on the subject.

"After despatching an express with the letter No. 1, and another express with the letter No. 2, and the instructions No. 3, I rode myself to Major Cogswell,* that I might be assured of his having received my orders. He arrived soon after, having received my letter from the express, whom I had directed not to cease riding until he had found him. The Major instantly wrote his orders relative to the removal of the boats, and sent them to his conductor before I left him.

"The next day (the 25th), late in the afternoon, my express returned from King's Ferry. Mr. Kiers, the Quartermaster there, was sick, and unable to do anything; but the express, agreeably to the conditional instructions I had given him, executed the orders with so much promptitude, that the next day he put into the boats near Suffern's three and forty oars. He informed me that there were no double-trees at the boats, but that the conductor would endeavor to procure some of the neighboring farmers; and, if he failed, the conductor said he would send back one of his people to fetch them from his quarters, and in the mean time get on with the boats as far as he could. About seven that evening I sent off the letter No. 5 to Major Cogswell, and

* Wagonmaster-General.

immediately afterwards rode myself to head-quarters. With what passed there Colonel Hamilton is acquainted.

“On the first notice of the affair I directed Colonel Baldwin to repair the carriages (which I went to examine) of the boats in camp, and get them ready to move by ten the next morning. On the 26th I went to the boats to see if they were in readiness. The carriages had been repaired, but the wheels wanted tar, and the boats thole-pins. These defects I caused to be remedied, and some spare thole-pins to be made, lest the other boats should be deficient; and about the time the teams were fixed to them the boats were ready to move.

“In the afternoon I rode to the two bridges (hurrying on the boats as I passed), where I expected to find the boats from Suffern’s; but, to my extreme mortification, they had not arrived. I immediately rode to Dodd’s, where I found Major Cogswell, who informed me the boats were near at hand. I waited a little for the arrival of some, and rode forward to meet the rest. They advanced with rapidity; and, after seeing half of them over the hill, and the residue just ascending, I returned to the two bridges, where I expected to meet some officer with orders, whether to proceed with the boats or stop there. For, not knowing the distance they would have to march beyond the point to which they were ordered to proceed, I could not determine, though I feared that they would arrive too late. But, on coming to the two bridges, whither Major Cogswell had galloped a little before me, he presented me with Major Langborn’s orders to drive on the boats with all possible despatch, and they were pushed accordingly.

“In the course of the business I gave many verbal directions, all tending to effect a punctual execution of orders; but they would be too tedious to relate, and some, as they arose from the occasion, I could not now recollect.

“I am sorry to trouble your Excellency with so long a detail; but I have felt too much pain not to attempt, by a relation of facts, to remove any unfavorable impression on

your Excellency's mind, which the event of the affair may have produced. I should also be happy that the Marquis were acquainted with the state of the matter as here given, if, in your Excellency's opinion, it amounts to a justification, or will in any degree lessen the blame I may otherwise incur.

"I should sooner have laid before your Excellency copies of my orders on this occasion, with such remarks as I have now made; but the business of my office, especially the writing divers public letters, which did not admit of delay, prevented me.

"I have the honor," &c.

It seems from the following letter from Mr. Peters, that Colonel Pickering had requested of the Board of War a commission as Quartermaster-General; but, as none is found among his papers, he may have been satisfied with Mr. Peters's suggestion, that the vote of Congress by which he was elected to that office was equivalent to a commission. He had also expressed himself better pleased with his new situation than with his late seat at the Board of War; but Mr. Peters's caution to him, not to rely on a continuance of present flattering appearances, was justified by the event.

"If Stoddert* and I can hammer out a form for your commission, it shall be sent. (This is an Irish postscript,—at the beginning of a letter.)

"PHILADELPHIA, November 4th, 1780.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have been made happy by the receipt of your letter relative to your personal ease and agreeable disappointments. I have not received more pleasure this long time than I felt from the satisfaction you seem to enjoy. I had

* Benjamin Stoddert, Secretary to the Board of War, and subsequently Secretary of the Navy under President John Adams.

anticipated so many embarrassments, that I almost dreaded to hear from you. I do not wonder that you do not wish to return to the Board. With my feelings and aversions, there could be no possible change for the worse. I am a very bad correspondent, and therefore I beg you may not conceive I forget you when I do not write. You are very often in my mind, and always in my heart. I wish most sincerely, that you may continue in the ideas you have of your department; but I cannot say I am entirely easy on the subject. For, though a patience under difficulties may at present subsist, there is a point beyond which toleration will not pass. I do not say this to make you uneasy, but to render you less susceptible of impressions flowing from a security grounded only on present appearances. I do not say these appearances will not continue; but I would wish you prepared in any event. For my part, I continue averse from public business and eternally wishing to leave it; but I hate to do it in times of distress, though I am preparing my affairs, so far as I can, for my *congé*. You know I have no personal comfort in my situation; and, as to emolument, I never sought it in any place, and more especially where I know it is not to be found. Apropos, I have, for the first time in my life, written to Congress about the salary of the Board, which was put one hundred and fifty dollars specie lower than it was originally. The comparison with others hurt me more than the sum. I have requested it to be set right, and mentioned that you were eventually concerned, either in compensation for past depreciation, or future salary on your return to the Board, and therefore desired anything done for me may also be done for you. I don't know what success my application may have. I shall, at all events, have one beatitude, which Mr. Pope reduced to an axiom, — 'Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.'

"I have no news to send you which can be depended upon. The newspaper is enclosed. There is generally such a farrago of lies and trash in the papers, that, though

you may now and then be amused with them, in general you need not regret Dunlap's neglect in not sending them.

"What sort of a commission do you want? As Quarter-master-General, Colonel, or what? Is not the Resolve of Congress a sufficient commission, or can the printed form be accommodated to your case?

"I have seen your letter by Mr. [John] Laurance, but not the bearer of it, whom I esteem on his own account, as well as his being your friend.

. . . "I have some touches of secret history to tell you, but if I had more paper I would be cautious in committing it. There is no small degree of *sweating** among some gentlemen on the score of the mail carried into New York. 'Learn to be wise by others' harms' is a good maxim.

"I am, with most sincere esteem, yours,

"RICHARD PETERS."

A singular correspondence took place between Colonel Pickering and Colonel Hugh Hughes, his deputy for the State of New York, the latter having, through misconstruction of a letter from Colonel Pickering, believed that he had offended him. The correspondence is of too little importance to be given at length;

* Occasionally, indiscreet letters from members of Congress and officers in the American army, found in the mails intercepted by the British, were published in New York, in Rivington's "Royal Gazette." Some of Colonel Pickering's letters, it seems, appeared in that paper. James Lovell wrote to him from Philadelphia, January 8th, 1781: "I see Jemmy Rivington has caught you. He is a tell-tale scoundrel, is he not? You would smile to hear what work the interpreters make here of my reference to some salt mackerel which Gerry promised to send to Mrs. Clymer. And they make my abbreviation of *Massachusetts* relate to Romish *mass*."

The curious statement is made in Custis's "Recollections of Washington" (pp. 293, 296), that Rivington was all the while in communication with General Washington. He was a publisher of books; and "he wrote his secret billets upon thin paper, and bound them in the cover of a book, which he always managed to sell to those spies of Washington who were constantly visiting New York, and who, he knew, would carry the volumes directly to the head-quarters of the army. The men employed in this special service were ignorant of the peculiar nature of it."

but some passages are extracted as characteristic of Colonel Pickering. It would seem that a person of the name of Lewis had written an uncivil letter to him, and that he had sent a sharp answer, for which Colonel Hughes complimented him as having the advantage of Lewis. He wrote, October 27th, 1780, in reply to the letter of Hughes:—

“You are very obliging in your remarks on the letters between Colonel Lewis and me. Really, Sir, I wish ever to be civil towards all men; but not unfrequently inattention (not designed), especially in matters that have as much of form as substance, subjects me to the charge of want of politeness. This inattention is a fault which I wish to amend; but it springs from my natural disposition, confirmed by habit. For, having, from my earliest remembrance of reflections of the kind, looked on all mankind as possessing equal rights, I am wont not to make those distinctions between the high and the low which gave birth to the term *politeness*.”

Hughes, mistaking the period at the end of the first sentence for a comma, and the comma after “Really, Sir,” for a period, construed the foregoing passage as an unaccountable strain of irony, and, in a second letter, requested an explanation of the sense in which Colonel Pickering had understood such part of his letter as had given ground for suspecting his veracity or his sense of decorum, and intimated that he would rather resign his office than live in a state of jealousy and suspicion. Colonel Pickering, not having been offended, nor having had any intention of giving offence, made merry with Hughes’s letter, and, being much puzzled by it, requested a sight of his own letter, or a copy, not having taken one. He then proceeded to say (October 30th):—

“My dear Sir, so far from being offended, I read your letter with much satisfaction, and recollect that I forbore taking notice of the first paragraph about Colonel Lewis’s affair, only because it appeared too flattering; and, instead of thanking you for the very favorable opinion you expressed of the propriety of my letter to him, went on to confess my general want of prudence and politeness, and to account for it from my natural disposition; for I was ever prone to *call a cat a cat*, and to estimate mankind (how proud and vain a man, you will say! indeed, my good Sir, I do pride myself in the consciousness of such a disposition) not by their wealth, titles, or connections, but, so far as I can discern their true characters, by their real worth. . . .

“Permit me now seriously to assure you, Sir, — and I do it with perfect sincerity, — that I had not the most distant idea of being offended with you. What absurdity I was guilty of in my letter I do not know; but this is certain, — that your uneasiness has arisen from a total misconception of the *intention* of it, however the terms might warrant your construction. In this instance we may see what is probably the ground of many quarrels, — *mere*, and perhaps mutual, *misapprehension*. But, as *we* are *friends*, and both wish to remain so, no ill consequence can follow from this strange incident. Perhaps it may do good; it may, in time to come, prevent our drawing too hasty conclusions from our mutual expressions in matters of real moment.”

In the same letter he writes: —

“Reflecting lately on the situation of my family in Philadelphia, and that the motives which brought it thither now had ceased, it struck me as the most eligible step I could take, that it were better to remove it to some place more within my reach, and where I could support it at much less expense; and, considering where may probably be the seat of the war for at least a year to come, I concluded that a most convenient residence would be somewhere above the

Highlands, not far from the Hudson. Can you advise me to an agreeable position, and help me to a tolerable shelter? I wish not for parade; convenience and comfort outweigh all other considerations. Mrs. Pickering will be an easy and kind neighbor; she has two fine boys and two honest maid-servants. These will constitute my family. . . . Your information and assistance in this affair will do me the greatest kindness."

Colonel Hughes replied: —

"FISHKILL, November 5th, 1780.

"Sir,

"I now declare solemnly, once for all, that there is no person with whom I have ever had any connection, that I would sooner serve than you."

He proceeds to account for and to excuse his mistake of the meaning of Colonel Pickering's letter. He states that he has found apartments for Mrs. Pickering in as elegant a farm-house as any in the county, in a village called New Hackinsack.

"The house is the property of a Dr. Thorn, a person once of a suspicious character, but now a *sworn Whig*. . . . I must not omit acquainting you, that some of the conditions are, that Mrs. Pickering stays no longer than till spring, if it should be found inconvenient for the family, and that no forage is to be taken but what can be spared without detriment to his stock. A temporary kitchen is also to be erected, if required; and we have boards, &c. Whatever sheds, stalls, &c., shall be wanted, must be supplied by me, if there is not room in the Doctor's stables, &c. . . . I expect your lady will be very happy there, as it is an orderly, good-natured family, and the Doctor's wife, I am informed, is well affected to the cause of her country, whatever he may be. She refuses to lodge any suspicious characters, or have any of their meetings, &c., held at her

house. The Doctor himself is naturally a good-natured, merry fellow; tells a good story, and sings now and then an old-fashioned song."

In the latter part of November, Colonel Pickering's family removed from Philadelphia to New Hackinsack, to the house of Dr. Thorn. He had previously written (November 7th) to Colonel Hughes, accepting his offer to provide their necessary winter stores, and saying:—

"You will perhaps repent of your readiness to serve me; for I am not very scrupulous in requesting the kind offices of my friends, when I think their goodness will prevent their giving me a denial. I will, however, be as little troublesome as possible; and, when I have asked as much as I can with decency, but still want more, I must get Mrs. Pickering to be my mediatrix; against whom a new account may be formed, and the enormity of my debt not be increased.

"You are an old housekeeper, and have anticipated all my wishes; and, though I have not my wife's answer respecting a permanent residence in your State, yet, as she is reasonable in her desires, and ever disposed to conform to whatever is most agreeable to me and most consistent with my interest, I have not the least doubt that the proposal will have her consent; besides, should she choose to go to New England again next spring, she will, by the proposed removal, have performed half the journey. I will, therefore, without hesitation, gladly accept of your offer to lay up for us the necessary winter stores."

After giving directions on that subject, Colonel Pickering says:—

"All the conditions stipulated by Dr. Thorn I am willing to comply with. His stables will have plenty of spare room for all my *cavalry*; for I am too poor to keep a car-

riage, and of course shall want no more forage than the public are to furnish me with ; and, as I shall be very little absent from the army, there will be seldom an occasion of making demands on the Doctor's haystacks ; though in emergencies he would surely be too good to deny me, at least on condition of repayment in kind ; which I would make, even if I sent to Connecticut for forage to enable me to do it. I doubt if any room will be wanting, excepting a *temporary kitchen* ; and this I believe will be indispensable, if there be not already a place to cook in separate from that of the Doctor's family. But, my dear Sir, you will suffer me to make one condition, — if public workmen and public stock are made use of in furnishing conveniences for myself and family, — which is, that you will take the trouble *to charge me with the real value of everything so furnished*. There are certain things to which, as an officer in the army, I am entitled at the public expense : these I am willing to accept, but nothing more, without paying therefor. My indignation, Sir, has often been kindled at a different conduct in others, and I will not, by committing a fault which I condemn in others, lay a foundation for *self-reproach* ; though, so frequent has been the practice, I may escape the reproach of the *world*.

“I have always kept a cow in Philadelphia, because I like *milk* better than *wine* — because I prefer it to all other food for children — and because none good could be bought ; but at Dr. Thorn's, I suppose, I can get milk in full plenty. . . .

“I beg your pardon for troubling you with such a detail, and more still for trespassing on your time for a mere private affair ; but in the end I hope it will be beneficial, not to myself only, for, if I can live at much less expense at Hackinsack than in Philadelphia, I shall be less disposed to ask an increase of pay on account of the expenses incurred in supporting a large family at camp.

“P. S. Upon reading over this letter, I felt a wish that neither public workmen nor public materials were at all employed in building a kitchen ; for, as in receiving my pay

I will give credit for the real value of them, the business may perhaps be as well done at once by private workmen with private stock, if to be obtained on a short credit; for by New Year's day I will pay the whole expense of it. If it be done by the public in the first instance, I may be reproached, for people will see the building, but not your books or my accounts. I mean not, however, to ask you to perform impossibilities. If you find a kitchen necessary . . . for the comfort and convenience of my family, let it be built at all events."

Manifestations of disinterestedness and of submission to personal inconvenience for the benefit of the public, were not of rare occurrence in the army of the Revolution. The preceding letter, and the following extracts from others, illustrate Colonel Pickering's character in these respects:—

TO HIS BROTHER.

"NEWBURGH, April 12th, 1781.

"You mention the ten half-joes which I sent for by Captain Abbot. My necessities have obliged me to call for a much larger sum on brother Williams. These wants will not, I hope, always continue; and, in the end, I trust I shall not lose, though I do not expect to gain, by serving the public. The depreciation being allowed for while a member of the Board of War, there is now a balance of near four thousand dollars, specie value, due to me; but it is impossible to obtain this from an empty treasury."

TO THE SAME.

"NEWBURGH, April 15th, 1781.

"The deficiency of my salary while a member of the Board of War has principally occasioned these draughts. That deficiency, however, Congress have agreed to supply, which leaves a balance still due to me of three thousand nine hun-

dred and fourteen dollars and one third, specie. But, as it is impossible to obtain this at present, and the expenses attending my present office are very great, I hope you and my other friends will readily excuse the draughts I am constrained to make on them. Could I appropriate monthly a part of the public moneys I receive, in discharge of my pay, I could support myself henceforward; but to take the whole of my pay in this manner would make too large deductions from those moneys while I am so scantily supplied."

FROM PETER ANSPACH.*

"NEW YORK, October 6th, 1789.

"I am almost certain that no case similar to yours and ours is to be met with anywhere, to wit, that a Quartermaster-General and his own immediate assistants, while possessed of as much public money as would answer for amounts due to them, should disburse that very sum (which was no more than their own due) among the sundry creditors, for the mere name of maintaining public credit, and thereby leave themselves moneyless."

In a letter from Newburgh of December 28th, 1780, to his brother, Colonel Pickering says, respecting his domestic arrangements:—

"I believe I informed you or Mr. Williams of my intention of removing my family from Philadelphia. They are with me at this place. We are all very well. As I had no inducement to carry my family to Philadelphia but to have them with me, so, on my removal, that inducement ceased,

* Mr. Anspach served under Colonel Pickering in the Quartermaster-General's department; first, as a clerk, from September 1st, 1780, to July 31st, 1781; then, as paymaster, until December 31st, 1782; and afterwards, probably to the end of the war, as an assistant quartermaster. He was engaged in the settlement of Colonel Pickering's accounts as Quartermaster-General when he wrote the letter above quoted. He was an accurate accountant, a worthy man, and warmly attached to Colonel Pickering.

and every reason conspired to urge my bringing them from that expensive city. I have now but one family, one set of servants instead of two, and the satisfaction of having my wife and children with me. Should the war continue, as it doubtless will, another year, I mean to find some convenient house in this State (probably between Fishkill and Poughkeepsie), where my family may remain during the next campaign."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Specie Payments and Specie Certificates. — Letter on these Subjects from Colonel Pickering to Congress. — Robert H. Harrison. — Colonel Pickering proposes Reforms in his Department. — Embarrassments in it. — His Public Spirit and Independence. — Legacy from his Friend, Colonel Flower. — His Aversion to Slavery.

By the new regulations* of the Quartermaster's department, the salaries of its officers were to be paid "in specie or other money equivalent"; and, as before mentioned, by a resolve† of Congress, the Quartermaster-General was authorized to issue certificates of debt, payable in the same way. Doubts, however, were entertained by some persons, whether a real equivalent to specie was intended by Congress; which doubts were strengthened by a resolve, that the salaries of certain *civil* officers, which had been made payable "in specie or other current money equivalent," should be paid in bills of credit of the "new emission."‡

Colonel Pickering went to Philadelphia in February, 1781 (arriving there on the 24th), for the purpose of making application to Congress in relation to the salaries and the specie certificates, and also of forwarding the movement of a detachment of troops under Lafayette.

* Journals of Congress, July 15th, 1780. † Ibid., August 23d, 1780.

‡ Ibid., September 13th and 25th, and November 15th, 1780.

On the 2d of March, at Philadelphia, he wrote to Mrs. Pickering: —

“I found our old acquaintances well, except Mr. Fooks,* who is much better, and Colonel Flower, who is not expected to live long. I went to see him the day I arrived. He said he had never expected to have that happiness. . . .

“I have yet had little time to speak or think of the first object of my journey, being busily engaged in forwarding the detachment. . . . I have now a little leisure, and shall frame my address on the subject. The affair is attended with embarrassments, and I know not what may be the result.”

He accordingly wrote to the President of Congress, under date of March 3d, 1781: —

“SIR,

“After twice requesting of Congress an explanation of their resolutions relative to the pay of the officers of my department, and the certificates I am authorized to issue, I would not again trouble them on the subject, if it did not appear to me indispensably necessary to come to a decision. To obtain this was the principal cause of my journey hither; though I was charged, at the same time, with the arrangements requisite for the march of the detachment under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette,† and attention to which has till this time prevented my applying to Congress on the subject of this letter.

“Trusting to the plain and obvious meaning of the words, I ventured to assure the persons concerned, that the moneys promised to be paid in specie or other current money equivalent would really be so paid, and that no bills of credit

* Paul Fooks, translator of languages to Congress.

† See letters of February 18th, 1781, from Colonel Pickering, and of March 2d, from the Marquis de Lafayette, to General Washington, in Sparks's “Correspondence of the American Revolution,” Vol. III. pp. 238, 248. The Marquis's letter shows that the march of the detachment from the Hudson River to the Head of Elk was performed prosperously and expeditiously.

should ever be tendered to them as such equivalent, unless they were current among the people at the rate of specie. By these assurances, I was enabled to organize the department, and to issue some certificates in lieu of money. But, as doubts still rose in the minds of many, I requested of Congress an explanation of the words in question. A resolution passed thereon, declaring a *real* and not a *nominal* equivalent was intended. But the next day this was ordered to be reconsidered, and, some time after, to be recommitted; and thus the matter rests. These proceedings were indeed represented to me in a light somewhat different. I was told that the resolution of October — was the next day repealed, and another resolution passed, declaring that the salaries and contracts fixed and promised to be paid in specie should be paid in bills of the new emission as equivalent to specie. The source and circumstances of the information were such as almost to exclude a doubt of the truth of it, and I could scarcely withhold my full belief, — when, turning over the Journals of Congress for September and November (just then arrived), I found that the salaries of the officers on the *civil* list, which in the first month had been fixed and made payable in specie or other current money equivalent, in the latter were ordered to be paid in bills of the new emission.

“Well knowing what would be the fatal effects of such a resolution respecting my department, I immediately communicated my information to the Commander-in-Chief, who thereupon gave me my present leave of absence. And now, although the representation differed from the fact, yet it appears to me not the less necessary that a clear and unequivocal explanation of the meaning of Congress should be given, and such further measures adopted and uniformly pursued, as shall recover and fix the confidence of the people. I am aware that this subject is not without embarrassments; yet the path of justice appears plain and simple, and with justice sound policy cannot be at variance.

“In the plan for the *Quartermaster's* department, I

supposed Congress intended to establish a permanent principle, in fixing the pay of the officers in a medium not liable to the continual changes of paper money, by a reliance on which persons suitably qualified might be encouraged to enter into the public service, and, receiving a just compensation, not be tempted to pay themselves at discretion. It was the establishing of this principle which led me to propose the issuing specie certificates. I had not then, nor long after, any knowledge of the tender laws relative to the bills of the new emission; and those respecting the old emissions, I thought had either been repealed, suspended, or become obsolete. I could not indeed conceive that such laws, which the experience of five years had shown to be injurious to public credit, destructive to the morals of the people, and beneficial to none but sharpers and fraudulent debtors, would ever have been revived. While these laws remain in force, the evils of which I complain will be remediless. Were Congress, at this time, to declare, in the most candid and explicit terms, that the salaries of persons in my department, and the specie contracts they have made, should be paid in gold and silver, or other moneys really equivalent, still I should be embarrassed; for the tender laws hang over my head, and threaten severe penalties if I attempt to act honestly by rating the current paper money at its *just*, instead of its *legal*, value. Yet there is not a single member of any public body in America who will accept a paper dollar of the new emission as an equivalent to a silver dollar. But a public officer must tender it as such. Hard condition to an honest man engaged in the service of his country! Why such a man, in his public office, should be obliged to do what, in his own private affairs, he would be ashamed of, I know not. Credit, or the reputation of integrity and good faith, is alike essential to the public as to an individual. The want of public credit I consider a greater calamity than the war itself; for, with the fair faith of 1775, and the paper currency established on its present funds, we could soon put an end to the war. Embarrassed as our affairs are at this

time, yet, with money equal to one fourth part of the expenses of the department for the current year, I would engage that the supplies and services expected from it should not fail, provided the iniquitous tender laws were immediately repealed, and such solemn public declarations made as should recover the lost confidence of the people, and induce them to believe that the promises made them should faithfully be performed. But, if some such measures are not speedily taken, or money furnished equal to, the whole expenses of the department, the public business will essentially suffer; and, were I to continue in office, I could not be answerable for deficiencies. I cannot continue unless enabled to do substantial justice.

“Diffident of my abilities, I ever supposed that an opinion of my integrity was a principal inducement to my election to the office I now hold, and, by discharging the duties of it with a certain degree of propriety, and acting uprightly, I hoped at least to be secured from censure. But, in the present state of things, this is impossible. A failure of supplies, or services, will incur blame; yet such failures must frequently happen, as money is not furnished equal to a tenth, perhaps not a twentieth, part of the expenses of the department, nor is there public credit to supply its place. The public faith, so often shaken, ceases, in a great degree, under the present measures of government, to give security. I speak from information, not conjecture.

“The uniform course of my walk in public life, I should hope, would exclude a suspicion that the fixing the value of my own salary was an object with me in my present application. Yet it is possible that, in the minds of gentlemen to whom I am not known, that suspicion may arise. To such my professions to the contrary might be in vain; I shall, therefore, waive them. But with sincerity I declare, that, honorable as my office is accounted, so great is its weight, and such difficulties attend the execution of it, I am willing to resign. A resignation would ease me of a load of anxiety by no means pleasant to bear. Or, if Con-

gress are now of opinion, that the salary, which, in the midst of their embarrassments occasioned by the resignation of my predecessor, and the fulness of their approbation on my appointment, they were pleased to grant me, is too high if paid in solid coin or its just equivalent, I am content it should be reduced to any sum they shall now deem proper.

“On revising this letter, I see that I have spoken my sentiments with freedom; yet I hope without offence. My words flowed from a strong conviction of the necessity of applying a radical remedy to the evils under which we groan, and which so deeply affect me as a public officer. Could I have expressed myself coldly on a subject so interesting, I must have been as insensible to my own honor as to the public good.”

Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife on the 9th of March, 1781:—

“My affair is before Congress. It excited general attention, and is committed to a committee of the whole house. I fear their decision will be too long in forming for me to stay here till it is made. If I discover a proper disposition in Congress to establish just principles, and seriously and diligently devise and pursue the measures which the public necessities require, I will return without waiting their decision. That such is the disposition of a majority of the members, I doubt not; but there appears, at the same time, a degree of timidity which makes them cautious of going to the bottom of the business. But ’tis time to have done with patchwork. We have been nearly ruined by it already. Such fair principles must be established, and open, honest measures pursued, as shall recover the *public credit*, than which nothing is more wanted, nothing is more essential to the welfare of the United States. . . . I intend to leave this city the beginning of next week, if the proceedings of Congress will admit of it. But do not expect me too soon. Congress, like other large assemblies, are

slow in business ; and the subject I have laid before them is of the first magnitude. It concerns, not my department only, but all others, and every individual in these States, namely, the management of our paper currency. I have the pleasure to inform you, my dear, (for you enjoy whatever gives me pleasure,) that some members expressed very great satisfaction with my letter, and were happy that I had started a subject on which, for the reasons I gave, it was evidently time to come to a fair and candid decision."

The next day he wrote to her again :—

"Our friend Mr. Fooks . . . told me yesterday, that my application to Congress was spoken of in high terms of approbation by divers gentlemen in the city. If it produces the effects it naturally leads to, not my department only, but every other, and, indeed, every honest man in America, will feel the benefit of it. And, should the consequences be so extensively useful, my interference will be a source of satisfaction all my life long. Should my application fail of success, I shall regret it exceedingly ; because I think the public welfare involved therein. To convince my enemies (for some I believe I have, who are also enemies to justice) that my personal interest was not an object with me in endeavoring to fix the value of the salaries, I told Congress that, if they thought my present salary too high, they might reduce it to any sum they should now judge proper. Of these things you will say nothing at present ; I mention them because I know they will give you pleasure ; for you will value what does me honor more than wealth."

Congress resolved :* —

"That all debts now due from the United States, which have been liquidated in specie value, and all debts which have been or shall be made payable in specie, or other

* Journals, March 16th, 1781. See also Journals, May 22d.

money equivalent, shall be actually paid, either in specie or other money equal thereto, according to the current exchange between such money and specie.

“That it be, and hereby is, recommended to the several States to amend their laws making the bills of credit emitted under the authority of Congress a legal tender, so that such bills shall not be a tender in any other manner than at their current value compared with gold and silver.”

The letter of March 2d to Mrs. Pickering, above cited, says:—

“The first salutation Mrs. Hastings gave me was, that I was coming to live here again. You know there was a new plan formed, abolishing the Board of War, and proposing a single Minister of War in their stead.* It seems I was in nomination for this new office. General Sullivan and Mr. Peters were my competitors. Colonel Miles saw me as I arrived, and gave me a hint of the matter; which surprised me nearly as much as when Mr. S. [Sherman] called me up to tell me I was nominated to be Quartermaster-General. But you need say nothing of this affair.”

A letter of an earlier date (February 15th) had been written by his friend Samuel Hodgdon, but had not been received, in which Mr. Hodgdon says:—

“Permit me to arrest your attention for a moment on a subject which, as an American, I feel interested in. I mean, the choice of a suitable person to superintend the War Department. This and the other similar appointments for the other branches engross the whole of conversation in every circle. On this occasion the virtuous citizens feel and lament the want of men qualified for these important trusts, as they are convinced nothing is wanting to bring in and support an army in the field, sufficient to

* Journals of Congress, February 7th, 1781.

destroy every hostile attempt of our enemies on the peace and happiness of America, but men of integrity and knowledge in war, to preside at the head of their affairs. In this situation they have again cast their eyes on you. Whether their representatives will gratify their wishes, by making choice of you as Minister or Secretary at War, time alone can determine. I have myself, in free conversations with some of the gentlemen belonging to Congress, mentioned the matter, and have always received for answer, ‘What shall we do for a Quartermaster-General?’ In reply, I have demanded whether a man’s merit ought to prevent his promotion. Upon the whole, were you present on the spot, I have reason to think you would once more experience a unanimous choice to the office in question; and you will do me the justice to acquit me of a design to flatter, when I tell you that this is mine and every other man’s wish that I have heard speak upon the subject. Your own good sense and delicacy will enable you to act right on the occasion. General Sullivan and Mr. Peters are also on the nomination, and both, I am informed, very desirous to obtain the appointment; * but, as Mr. Lovell has promised me to write you by this conveyance, on the subject, I add no more.”

While he was in Philadelphia, Colonel Pickering was much annoyed by the information in a letter from Mrs. Pickering, dated Newburgh, March 7th, 1781 : —

* General Sullivan, in a letter to General Washington, March 6th, 1781, says : “ I was nominated against my will, and, if chosen, should not have accepted.” — Sparks’s “ *Correspondence of the Revolution*,” Vol. III. p. 253. — Mr. Peters, in reference to a Report before Congress in favor of establishing the office, wrote to Colonel Pickering, January 16th, 1781 : “ I doubt whether I shall have anything to do with the matter; nor do I wish to undertake so arduous a charge. . . . I have neither vanity nor ambition to be gratified in this way.” With his ability and industry, and his experience in the War Office, it can hardly be doubted that the department, had it been confided to him, would have been satisfactorily administered. The election of the Secretary of War was postponed until October, when General Lincoln was chosen, and on a salary of four thousand dollars. — *Journals*, October 1st and 30th, 1781.

"The weather has been very unpleasant for this week past, and unfortunately we have had no wood for these five days but what we have borrowed, and of that but a scant supply. Our credit in that way begins to run low now. I know not from what cause it proceeds; I believe no great exertion is made to procure any wood."

He replied, on the 13th:—

"I cannot express in terms sufficiently strong my grief and indignation at your late sufferings and the cause of them. The information came to hand last evening, and kept me awake half the night. I am to the last degree impatient to return. . . .

"P. S. My mind is so much agitated, I can scarcely attend to business. Congress have made such progress on the subject of my letter, that I hope earnestly two or three days will so ripen their measures as to enable me to return."

On the 20th of March, 1781, he wrote to Mrs. Pickering:—

"Congress have at last come to such conclusions as I desired respecting specie salaries and certificates, and have recommended a repeal of the iniquitous tender laws. . . . I know at present of nothing to detain me here beyond to-morrow night, provided Congress, in the interim, can hold up any prospect of furnishing money for enabling me to procure the great supplies necessary for the next campaign; but I shall not wait for their grants.

"This will be delivered to you by my worthy friend, Colonel Harrison, who is going to head-quarters, though not to stay any longer with the army. He is appointed a judge of the Supreme Court in Maryland, a place of honor, and with a salary adequate to his support. He, like me, is, above all things, fond of domestic life, and, after devoting so many years of his life to the public in the field, embraces with joy this opportunity of retiring. For your sake, my dearest, as well as my own, I most earnestly hope that this

year may relieve me from the busy, bustling scenes of war, and that such means of supporting a family may present as shall never more require our separation."

Before leaving Philadelphia, he wrote two long letters (dated March 21st and 24th) to the President of Congress, in which he represented the necessity of allowing to some of the officers in his department forage and rations, and an increase of compensation beyond the pay fixed by the late regulations of the department. He also argued that several offices, including those of the Assistant Quartermaster-General, the Commissary of Purchases, and the issuing Commissaries at posts, might well be abolished. Some officers he had already discharged, as being unnecessary.

He suggested the abolition of the regiment of artificers, whose pay he estimated at six thousand eight hundred and fifty-three dollars and one third a month, and the employment of a director of artificers, four master workmen, four foremen, and one hundred journeymen, who would do as much (and beyond comparison better) work as the regiment, and whose pay would amount to only three thousand four hundred and twenty dollars a month.* He says: —

"That I have interested views in the reformation here proposed, I will not deny. The saving to the public in such immense sums as an adoption of these or similar measures would produce, would be a source of pleasing reflection to me during life. But I hope it will not be deemed unlawful

* General Washington wrote to Colonel Pickering, January 1st, 1781: "In general, though they [the corps of artificers] receive high wages, as far as they have come under my observation they appear to work little, and the officers to have forgotten the end of their appointment, and to have assumed the appearances and pretensions of officers of the line, instead of accommodating themselves to the spirit of their stations."

to derive from them another advantage. A small portion of the moneys so saved, distributed among some of the officers in my department so as to accommodate their pay and allowances to circumstances, to the importance of their offices, and the quantity of business they transact, would retain them in the public service, would give them content, and relieve me from the trouble and anxiety which their quitting the service would occasion."

Mr. Hodgdon wrote to Colonel Pickering from Philadelphia, on the 16th of April:—

"Nothing further, that I can learn, has been done with any of your matters since you left this; only I was informed by General — that his Excellency did not approve of your plan, and that he never thought he would."

In reply (April 22d), Colonel Pickering said:—

"As to the rejection of the plan, it is rather a relief than a matter of regret to me. General —, I suppose, plumes himself on the event. He is welcome. I would rather rejoice when the public interest was evidently promoted. I thought (such was my weakness) that two hundred thousand hard dollars *per annum* were worth saving. I declared (and with sincerity) that I did not want to be the executor; but is there no man in the United States whose abilities can comprehend and execute the plans proposed, in addition to the duties of the Quartermaster's department? And why can't he be appointed? If the half of that sum can be saved by him to the public, I will not stand in his way a moment."

The Board of War approved of many of Colonel Pickering's recommendations; but it does not appear by the Journals, that Congress acted in express reference to them. The artificers, however, were reduced

to one company for the main army, one for the southern army,* and one at Carlisle; and on the resignation of Charles Pettit, Assistant Quartermaster-General, his office was abolished.†

In another letter (March 30th) to the President of Congress, Colonel Pickering represented, at much length and in strong terms, the distresses of his department for want of money; that the credit of the United States was at the lowest ebb; and that, unless he were furnished with money, public business would either cease altogether, or, where partially continued, it would be with the greatest difficulty and disadvantage. Towards the end of the letter he gives the reasons of his having remained so long in Philadelphia, saying:—

“To this long letter I beg leave only to add, that I have continued here with an expectation that my information might be of some use in framing those economical arrangements which I have had the honor to lay before Congress; to obtain those additional allowances for some officers in my department which their services and stations require; to propose those amendments in the systems already established, and those additional provisions, which are herein suggested; and, above all, to procure money for the purpose mentioned in my estimates for a part of the services of the ensuing campaign. But, in regard to the latter, I must return hopeless. The Board of Treasury, to whom it was referred to find the way and means of supplying the money demanded, have not the least prospect of furnishing a single shilling. Of consequence, no material provision can be made of the articles necessary to enable the army to take the field. Many of them require time in preparing; but without money they cannot be begun.”

* Journals of Congress, March 29th, 1781.

† Ibid., June 20th, 1781.

The following cogent extract on the same topic is from a letter of the 21st of April, 1781, to the President of Congress, written after Colonel Pickering's return to Newburgh:—

“I do not mean to be continually wounding the ears of Congress with tales of public poverty and distress. These already are but too well known; and till there is some prospect of relief I shall not think it necessary to repeat them. Permit me, Sir, only to say, once for all, that, if camp equipage, forage, and other supplies in my department shall fail; if transportation shall cease; if the necessary officers, artificers, watermen, and laborers shall abandon the service; in a word, if the business of the department shall absolutely stop,—the blame, I hope, will not be thrown on me. If any other man can, without money, carry on the extensive business of this department, I wish most sincerely he would take my place. I confess myself incapable of doing it.”

Having, in a letter of the 8th of May, 1781, to Mr. Hodgdon, mentioned great losses sustained by his brothers-in-law, Gardner and Williams, by the capture of their ships at St. Eustatia, by Admiral Rodney, he adds, in the spirit of the period:—

“These misfortunes affect me not only as a brother, but as a borrower of money. I depended on Mr. Williams for a supply of cash on every occasion. I shall decline drawing on him in future, and must, therefore, mortgage or sell a piece of land for my support. However, I remember the time when I would cheerfully have parted with one half or the whole of my little patrimony, for ever, to have put an end to the war, and to establish our liberties. I can still do it without murmuring, if it be necessary.”

It seems, from the following letter to Mr. Hodgdon, that Colonel Pickering had enemies desirous of having him removed from his office; but who they were, and what were the grounds of discontent, are not mentioned. The abolition proposed by him of certain offices was not agreeable to some of the incumbents; and it may be presumed that due allowance was not made by others for the impossibility of performing the duties of Quartermaster-General satisfactorily without money.

“NEWBURGH, May 22d, 1781.”

“All things and circumstances considered, I conclude to give up all thoughts of buying Colonel Flower’s mare. Before she would be of use I may be a private man. I am well satisfied the efforts of some persons will not be wanting to effect it. But I defy their malice as much as I detest their principles; not because I think they cannot succeed, but because their success would not mortify me. Conscious of upright, and diligent, and even laborious endeavors to perform the duties of my office, they cannot hurt me, though I should be removed from office. I sometimes think that the day is fast approaching when ‘the post of honor’ will be ‘a private station.’ Rank and office I can quit without a sigh. With pleasure I should handle the peaceful instruments of husbandry; for *I can dig, though I am ashamed to beg*. I believe I am neither vain nor envious; but I think too highly of the dignity of human nature, of the equal rights of all mankind, — or, if you please, I have too much pride, — to worship at the shrine of any individual, or collection, of my fellow-mortals. But this unaccommodating disposition may create me enemies who will *attempt* my ruin; but, as I said before, they cannot hurt me. The tenor of your letter, with the complexion of one or two lately received from another quarter, have given rise to these reflections. But I have done. . . . I thank you for the information respecting the bequest of my deceased

friend.* It is a handsome one, and given in terms that cannot fail to please."

Mr. Hodgdon informed Colonel Pickering that a negro girl, about thirteen years old, had been brought into Philadelphia in a prize vessel, and would probably be sold; and he inquired whether Mrs. Pickering would not like to have her as a servant. Colonel Pickering's dislike of slavery is shown in his answer, dated June 13th, 1781:—

"My wife would be well pleased with the services of the negro girl, if she is a good one. Her moving condition renders it difficult to get help, and therefore one bound to her, or one of the family, always to go with her, will be convenient; but we will never have a *slave*. . . . As a servant for years, we should not object; but you will probably be directed to sell her for the most she will fetch. If, however, the owners were to consent to let us have her for five, six, or seven years, at a reasonable price, the girl then to be free, we shall be willing and glad to have her, provided she manifests a good disposition."

* Colonel Benjamin Flower, Commissary-General of Military Stores. Writing to Mr. Hodgdon, the deputy of Colonel Flower, under date of Newburgh, May 5th, Colonel Pickering says: "Mr. [Samuel] Adams called here to-day; he informs me that our friend Colonel Flower is at length relieved from the miseries of life. Considering his situation, this event must rather yield comfort than distress to the surviving friends who saw the anguish of his wasting disease. I assure myself you will have no competitor for the succession. I wish you success in every undertaking, for I know you will deserve it."

The bequest was as follows: "I give unto my beloved and much respected friend, Colonel Timothy Pickering, as a small testimony of the great esteem I bear for him, my brace of elegant pistols, made by Joseph Perkins, my carbine, taken trophy at the engagement of Princeton, my small sword, with a leathern scabbard, and my saddle and bridle." Colonel Flower was grateful for the interposition of Colonel Pickering and Mr. Peters on his behalf, which led to the misunderstanding between them and Congress. See page 219 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XIX.

Skirmish between General Lincoln and British Troops. — Junction of the French and the American Armies. — Attempt to capture Cornwallis resolved on. — March of the Army to Yorktown. — Baltimore. — Mount Vernon. — Williamsburg. — Lord Boteourt. — Virginia Ideas. — Agriculture of Virginia. — Cornwallis's Forces, and his Proceedings.

IN the early part of the campaign of 1781, it was the intention of General Washington to lay siege to the city of New York; but, in consequence of the failure of coöperation on the part of the French fleet, he gave up the project, and resolved upon attempting the capture of Cornwallis. The part borne by Colonel Pickering, and the incidents affecting him, during the campaign, are shown, in some measure, by a short journal kept by him, and by some of his letters, from which the following extracts are taken:—

Journal. — “June 27th. — Joined the army encamped at Peekskill.

“July 2d. — The army marched to Tarrytown. At sundown pursued their march, and early the morning of the 3d reached Valentine's Hill. General Lincoln with his command, who, the night of the 2d, had gone down the river with a view of taking some of the enemy's works, and making a lodgement on York Island, was disappointed.* But, landing about Phillips's, they accidentally fell in with a party of *yagers*, who, supported by other troops from York Island, maintained a severe skirmish with General

* See Sparks's “Writings of Washington,” Vol. VIII. pp. 97, 98.

Lincoln, with a large and very disproportionate loss to the latter. The combatants seem to have parted by consent; or, rather, General Lincoln retreated, and the enemy did not pursue.* General Washington, with others, reconnoitred at a distance the enemy's works at the north end of York Island, and then the troops retired, and lay on their arms the night of the 3d, at Valentine's Hill.

"4th. — The army marched up on the east side of Sawmill River, and formed an encampment on the first hills eastward of it, the road from Dobbs's Ferry (from which we were distant about two miles and a half) to White Plains running between the front and rear lines.

"5th. — The French army from Rhode Island arrived, and formed their camp on the left of the American camp.

"In this position the two armies lay until the 19th of August, in the mean time all preparations going on for the siege of New York.

"August 15th. — But about the 15th a packet arrived, informing that Count de Grasse, who commanded the French fleet in the West Indies, intended to sail for the Chesapeake, and not for New York. The design against New York thus failing, the General communicated to me his intentions to march with a part of the army to Virginia, to attempt the capture of Cornwallis, the destination of the French fleet rendering that the only enterprise of moment that could then be undertaken."

In a published letter † to Governor Sullivan of April 22d, 1808, Colonel Pickering says:—

* In a letter to his wife, dated "Camp, July 6th, 1781," Colonel Pickering says: "General Lincoln commanded a detachment which was attacked by the enemy, and overpowered by superior numbers. Our loss is not yet ascertained; about forty wounded were brought off. . . . We are now encamped about a dozen miles from the enemy, at Kingsbridge. To-day the French army joined us."

On the 14th he desires her to send him a barrel or two of cider, for his use at camp, accompanying his request with the remark, "The French are fond of cider, but hate grog."

† "Interesting Correspondence between . . . Governour Sullivan and Colonel Pickering." . . . Boston, 1808, p. 29.

“The project of besieging the city of New York, in 1781, having been relinquished, and the siege of Yorktown, in Virginia, resolved on, I received General Washington’s orders to prepare immediately for the march of a part of the army to that place, and for the transportation of artillery, and of all the stores requisite for the siege. This was done.”

Journal. — “August 19th. — The removal of the stores of the American and French armies being effected, the two camps were this day broken up, and the two armies marched for King’s Ferry. General Heath only remained, with the residue of the N. H., M., and C. [New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut] lines about two days, when he marched and encamped at Peekskill.*

“20th, Monday. — This morning the detachments from the American army reached King’s Ferry, and began to cross; and such despatch was used that day, the following night, and Tuesday morning, that the baggage, park, and American troops had crossed by noon of the 21st. It was the 27th before the whole of the French army, their artillery and baggage, had crossed.†

“27th. — I proceeded to near Suffern’s, having seen the thirty bateaux, quartermaster’s stores, &c., so far on their way.

“29th. — I joined the American troops at Brunswick Landing.

“30th. — Rode from Brunswick Landing to Philadelphia, sixty miles.”

He wrote to Mrs. Pickering, from Philadelphia, September 7th:—

“I am just on the point of setting out for Virginia. The fairest prospects present of complete success. Besides the

* See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. VIII. p. 136.

† Ibid., pp. 139, 140, note.

great superiority in ships to the British, the French have landed upwards of three thousand men southward of Cornwallis, to prevent his escape into Carolina."

Journal. — "September 7th. — At sunset left Philadelphia, and the next day arrived at the Head of Elk. That morning the Commander-in-Chief had left Elk and pursued his journey to Virginia."

From the Head of Elk, Colonel Pickering wrote, on the 9th of September, to his wife:—

"Here I am, my dearest, in perfect health. Presently I set out for Williamsburg by land. It will be a seven or eight days' journey, and give me an opportunity of seeing Maryland and Virginia. I hope, in a little time, to congratulate you on the capture of Cornwallis and his army. Should we succeed at all, the work, I think, will be short; and the only chance of ill success will arise from this,—that Cornwallis may possibly attempt to save himself by flight, by marching his army up the country, and then pushing to South Carolina. But a few days' delay will render this impossible, as our troops will soon surround him."

Journal. — "September 9th. — I proceeded for Williamsburg, where I arrived the 16th.

"From the Susquehanna to Baltimore, the country in general presents you with nothing very agreeable. The soil is for the most part ordinary. Baltimore is a pretty town; the houses are of brick, and well built. 'Tis well situated for trade, at the head of the Bay of Chesapeake, and has depth of water sufficient for vessels of as great burden as are generally used in the merchants' service. The town contains perhaps six hundred dwelling-houses.

"Georgetown, on the north side of the Potomac, is about forty-five miles from Baltimore, contains about eighty or a hundred houses, and is well situated for trade. 'Tis said to be two hundred miles from the mouth of the river. Two

or three miles above Georgetown are falls in the river, which put an end to the navigation from the bay. But the Potomac extends far into a rich country above, and must greatly facilitate, at certain seasons, the transportation of its produce to market.

“Eight miles below Georgetown, and on the opposite side of the river, stands the town of Alexandria, in Virginia; for the Potomac is the boundary between this State and Maryland. This town is more than twice as large as Georgetown, and, before the war, was rapidly increasing, the course of trade being turned to it; which, at the same time, prevented or checked the growth of Georgetown. At this place the Potomac is about a quarter or a third of a mile wide, and will admit vessels of five hundred tons burden. At Alexandria 'tis of double that width, and deeper.

“Ten miles below Alexandria is Mount Vernon, the seat of General Washington. It is on an elevated bank of the Potomac, where the river winds agreeably, and from whence you have a fine and extensive prospect of the country, as well in Maryland as Virginia. The house, it seems, was an old one, to which many additions have been made, and, like other patchwork, exhibits nothing striking.

“Colchester and Dumfries (the first, twenty, the other, thirty miles from Alexandria) are small villages, situated on creeks that run into the Potomac, from which they are only a few miles distant. Dumfries was said to be one of the capital landings for tobacco. Vessels can come up only to the mouth of the creek, to which the tobacco must be carried in scows four or five miles from the landing. Of late years (before the war) considerable quantities of wheat were brought from the country back, and exported from Dumfries.

“Fredericksburg is a pleasant town, and agreeably situated on the southern side of the Rappahannock, which is there perhaps three hundred and fifty yards wide. Vessels of a hundred or a hundred and fifty tons may come to load

at this great tobacco landing. 'Tis fifty-five miles from Alexandria, and about a hundred and ten from Williamsburg. It contains as many, or more, houses than Alexandria.

“About fifty miles from Fredericksburg you cross the northern branch (called Matapony) of York River; and about twenty-four miles farther on, you cross the southern branch (which is four times as large as the other), called Pamunkey, at a place called Ruffin's Ferry. Travelling from hence thirty-six miles, you arrive at Williamsburg. This is a pleasant town, situated about midway between York and James Rivers. A creek, or creeks, from both come up near the town; one within a mile, where craft drawing five or six feet of water may unload. It has one very spacious street, said to be a mile in length. At the extremities, and bounding the view, are two large buildings, which have a grand and elegant appearance; at the west end, the college, at the other, the Capitol, or State House. About the centre of this street, but retired perhaps two hundred yards, with a large court in front, stands the *palace*, the residence of their Governor. It is two stories high, and has a decent appearance outside, but nothing magnificent. The rooms were finished in a rich and costly manner; but, since the war, they are wholly defaced. In the centre of the Capitol, and encircled by iron pales, stands the grand marble statue of Lord Botetourt, the last but one of their Royal Governors. He stands in a graceful posture of address, with his left hand at his side, holding his coronet under his arm, and in the other hand, with the arm a little extended, a roll of parchment. His countenance seems marked with sixty years. He was almost adored by the Virginians, who still speak in raptures of his virtues and his elegant and engaging manners.

“In a building near the palace are to be seen the remains of the richly-ornamented *state coach*, which was brought over with Lord Botetourt, and once used by him to carry him from the palace to the Capitol. 'Tis a clumsy machine,

and enormously heavy, — perhaps equal to two common wagons. It is gilded in every part, even the edges of the tires of the wheels. The arms of Virginia are painted on every side. The motto of the arms led me to remark how peculiarly disposed the Virginians have been to adopt ideas of royalty and magnificence. For instance, the residence of their Governors was not a ‘Province *House*,’ but a *Palace*; the building in which the General Assembly met was not even a *State House*, but ‘*the Capitol*.’ But the motto of their arms reminded me of the style of dominion assumed by Eastern monarchs, who, among other titles of magnificence, call themselves ‘Lords of the whole earth.’ The motto is, *En dat Virginia quartam*, — that is, ‘Virginia gives a fourth quarter to the world.’

“On the whole road from Alexandria to Williamsburg, the country is so generally level, and presents so uniformly woods (a large proportion pitch-pine), corn and tobacco fields, (the prospect being ever bounded by very short limits,) that the eye is tired with the sameness of the scene. Every field almost is skirted with woods, so that your view seldom exceeds a mile in extent; and for a large proportion of the way you can see but a few rods on either hand, as the road is lined with thick woods.

“The surface of the ground is generally sandy; but you very commonly find clay beneath the soil, at the depth of one or two feet or more; and this clay, if by deep ploughing, or otherwise, it were mingled with the sandy surface, I should suppose would furnish a perpetual supply of manure.

“The great articles of culture in Virginia are Indian corn and tobacco. They also raise considerable quantities of excellent wheat; and every plantation yields some cotton, which is of a fine texture, and whiter, though shorter, than the West India cotton. The soil is admirably adapted to the culture of lucern, and they have many low grounds fitted to the production of timothy; but neither of these

grasses is generally cultivated; and southward of the Rappahannock you meet with no other long forage than [Indian] corn blades and tops." *

* At the end of the *journal* are a few memorandums on the ordinary produce of lands in the lower parts of Virginia. In regard to cotton, Colonel Pickering says:—

“A light, mellow soil, pretty rich, will produce [per acre] two thousand pounds of cotton, which, when ginned (by which process the seeds are taken out), will yield five hundred pounds of clean cotton; which, before the war, sold for a pistareen [twenty cents] a pound.

“Cotton seeds are commonly planted about the middle of April. When the stalks are about eighteen inches high, they nip off the tops, to make the larger pods, and to ripen them the sooner. The branches from the stalks are likewise to be nipped, and all suckers broken off. Most plant the cotton in hills, but Mr. Holt says it is better in drills, and commonly two feet apart; but it would doubtless be still better to sow it three or four feet apart, to admit the hoe-plough.”

CHAPTER XX.

Investment of Yorktown. — Progress of the Siege. — Surrender of Cornwallis. — Colonel Scammell mortally wounded. — Postage on the Quartermaster-General's Letters. — Plunder of surrendered Tents and Stores. — Storekeepers in Yorktown and Gloucester. — Officers in the Quartermaster-General's Department in Regard to Half Pay. — Ill Designs against Colonel Pickering. — Expensiveness of Living in Philadelphia.

THE letters and journal of Colonel Pickering contain accounts of further proceedings and incidents connected with the siege of Yorktown.

He wrote from Williamsburg, September 21st, 1781, to Samuel Hodgdon: —

“The departure of the French fleet, in pursuit of the British, induced the General (then on his way to Williamsburg) to direct the troops to stay at Annapolis till he should hear further relative to the two fleets. That of the French having soon returned, and with it that from Rhode Island, the troops were ordered down. Yesterday the first division arrived in James River, and the whole are expected to-day, the wind being northerly. The unavoidable delay in getting forward our troops and stores has given Cornwallis time to strengthen himself by many works; but they are not ‘impregnable.’ In a day or two, I suppose, we shall move down to York and commence the siege. By the last of October I hope to congratulate you on the enemy's surrender. Cornwallis, however, will doubtless make an obstinate defence. Though his talents are moderate, he is known to be brave and persevering. He is said to have a hundred sail of vessels at York. From these he has probably received a reinforcement of a thousand men, at least. The

guns of the ships of war he is mounting on his batteries. His whole force may amount to six thousand men,* of whom four thousand five hundred are supposed to be regular troops. He had, perhaps, two thousand negroes, with whose labor, chiefly, he has raised his works. By hard fare and severities these wretches have suffered exceedingly; many have perished, and many are coming off. Those that are become unfit for labor, the enemy doubtless wish to get rid of. Their toils have saved his regular troops fresh for the siege.

"It is Cornwallis's duty to make the best defence in his power; but it is said some of his officers have been heard to say they 'expect' (to use their own words) 'to be Burgoyned.' Indeed I see scarcely a possibility of their escaping. The weather here is fine often till Christmas; and there is little probability of a British naval force superior to that of the French, now consisting of thirty-six sail of the line. I shall be disappointed if Cornwallis stands a siege of six weeks. Our whole regular force, when collected, will amount to fifteen thousand men. If Cornwallis resists so long such a superiority, in works suddenly raised of earth, he will deserve great credit.

"At present we want nothing but horses and wagons. Those which came on from the northward, I expect, will arrive here in five or six days. In the mean time, we shall muster so many as will enable us to move to invest the enemy. . . .

"P. S. Remember, I write you nothing now, nor shall I hereafter, for *publication*, but merely for the information of yourself and a few friends. If I should have no objection to your publishing any intelligence in future, I will tell you so. — September 24th. The first division did not land entirely till yesterday. The second is expected to-day. Nothing new, except that a vessel, with three British officers from Charleston, ran into the French fleet and was taken.

* Lossing says about seven thousand. — *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution*, Vol. II. pp. 510, 526.

Journal. — "September 28th. — The allied army marched from Williamsburg to the vicinity of York. The French took their position on the left.

"September 29th. — The American army marched over a bridge, and took a position extending from the morass, which separated us from the French army, to beyond the Hampton road from York.

"September 30th. — Colonel Scammell, in reconnoitring, was wounded and taken prisoner. He was barbarously wounded. . . . The enemy in York treated him kindly afterwards, particularly the surgeons. He was suffered to go to Williamsburg on parole."

In a letter to his wife, dated "Camp before Yorktown, October 1st," he wrote:—

"The enemy have abandoned some of their outworks, which will probably, in some degree, shorten the siege." *

Journal. — "October 7th. — The enemy fired frequently; but appear not to have discovered our working parties in the trenches.

"October 8th. — The troops in the trenches completing the first parallel and two redoubts. A battery also was begun this night on our right, near the bank of York River, and forwarded greatly, so that by the 9th at night it was finished. Another battery was erected towards the left of the American parallel. The French troops erected the like works, and their parallel united with ours.

"October 9th. — The artillery and stores were carried to the batteries.

"October 10th. — . . . Evening, eight o'clock. A house in York on fire, supposed to be Secretary Nelson's.

"October 11th. — The fire discovered last evening was

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 169. Some occurrences connected with Colonel Pickering's department are mentioned in his letter of October 5th to General Washington, in Sparks's "Correspondence of the American Revolution," Vol. III. p. 418.

not of a house burning in York, but the British frigate *Charon*, in the river. She was of fifty guns, and was set on fire by red-hot shot thrown from a battery of the Marquis St. Simon's. She had been previously stripped by the enemy, who had mounted her cannon on the batteries in town.

"The firing from all our batteries continued during this day. In the evening a second parallel was begun and completed during the night, without annoyance from the enemy.

"October 12th. — The cannonade and bombardment continued. 13th. — The same."

Colonel Pickering wrote to Mrs. Pickering on the 11th of October:—

"It may give you some pleasure to be informed of the proceedings of the allied army, especially as the present object of their attention is important, and generally interesting, so that the event of this expedition may capitally affect our negotiations for peace. September 28th, the armies marched to the vicinity of York; and then, and on the 29th, invested the place. . . . We have had very few men killed; and not one officer, as I recollect, has been hurt, excepting Colonel Scammell, who was unfortunately wounded and taken prisoner the 30th of September, while reconnoitring a work the enemy had abandoned. It was barbarously done; for, after two dragoons had him their prisoner, a third came up and shot him through the side. Of this wound he died the 6th instant, at Williamsburg, lamented by all who knew him, and who valued friendship, integrity, and truth. The French have had an officer or two badly wounded."

The larger part of the preceding letter is omitted, many of the facts therein mentioned being more fully stated in the following extracts from a letter to Samuel Hodgdon, dated the 11th of October, nine o'clock in

the evening. This letter is written in the form of a journal.

“October 6th. — Until this day the armies were occupied in debarking and getting up their stores and cannon from James River, at landings six or seven miles distant from our camp, — in opening communications through a morass, — and in making fascines, saucissons, pickets, and gabions. In the evening of this day the trenches were opened, and by morning the first parallel was in great forwardness, and two redoubts begun.* It was fortunately cloudy, and it rained gently; otherwise the moon (just passed the full) might have proved very injurious, by discovering us to the enemy. Not a man was hurt during the night.

“October 9th. — By this time our first parallel, with two redoubts, were nearly complete, and two batteries erected by the American army.

“October 10th. — This morning our two batteries were opened. The French army opened two more, besides one on their left near York River. The whole have continued firing shot and shells to this moment (October 11th), and the noise of the cannon and mortars is now sounding in my ears.

“Yesterday, Secretary Nelson came out of York. He was put under no restraint by the enemy. He says our shells had great effect. The enemy retired for shelter under the bank of the river, but the shells annoyed them there. He said a boat had arrived from New York with two Majors on board, who said a British fleet of thirty sail would come to relieve Cornwallis in seven days. It seems that Cornwallis's army depend on this; which, by the way, is a confession they have no alternative for safety, and, *that failing*, that they must fall. I conceive it to be in the power of the Count de Grasse to disappoint their hopes; and yet I confess I am a little afraid that at least some relief may be thrown in, of stores if not of troops; for in a case so important the

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 173.

British will run great hazards; and they may hope that a prolongation of the siege may oblige us to raise it. However, eventually, I cannot but look for complete success.

"Last evening, the *Charon*, of fifty guns (said to be set on fire by hot shot from a French battery), and another vessel, were burnt between York and Gloucester, and this morning a third. Cornwallis has now only one frigate (the *Guadaloupe*) left for his principal naval force. The *Charon* had been dismantled to furnish cannon and stores for the enemy's batteries.

"Knox damns the Pennsylvania shells, as not being well cast, varying greatly in weight, and especially for not being proved. As a proof of the latter, they observed that the cores have not been well cleaned out; so that, if they in fact passed a proof, it is not a full evidence that they are sound, as any holes might be stopped up by the remains of the cores. He and Bowman [Bauman?] say, Faesch's are perfect. Bowman proved them.

"I observed to you, that the batteries had continued firing from the time they were first opened to this moment (say forty hours), and the artillery gentlemen suppose, with great effect. But though I am ready to acknowledge their abilities, yet I do not imagine they can work miracles. We know what has, in times past, been the effect of British cannon against our earthen defences, and I cannot think ours to be essentially different. At the present distance of our batteries (say five hundred yards), they might fire till Christmas without materially lessening the enemy's force. The shells, falling in a variety of places, are doubtless troublesome, and do some mischief. I am impatient to get nearer to the enemy, that our work may be more speedily accomplished, and our ammunition not thrown away. Cornwallis prudently reserves his till that time. He scarcely answers one shot in fifty.

"This night, I expect, our approaches commence. The engineers chose to complete our first parallel, with the redoubts and batteries, that we might be perfectly secure from

the enemy's sallies, however vigorous, before they began a second. This is doubtless right; but I think we might have dug with more advantage than we have fired these two days past, during which very little work has been done. But I do not pretend to be a competent judge, as I am neither an artillerist nor an engineer. Yet, after eight or ten hours' firing of our batteries, looking with a glass, I could discern no injury done to the enemy's works. They were induced to fill up the embrasure in one work, and to draw their cannon behind the merlons in another; for, as I told you above, they did not return our fire.*

"Three quarters past nine. The firing continues frequent. It may be useful now, if our workmen are making their approaches. But I shall hear the firing with more pleasure when our cannon are mounted on the batteries which shall be erected beyond the next parallel."

An inadvertence, probably, on the part of Congress, which was mortifying to Colonel Pickering, and which might have proved injurious to the public service, is disclosed in the following letter to the President, dated "Camp before York, October 11th":—

"Two or three days since, I had the mortification to be refused the letters in the post-office addressed to me, unless I paid the postage. Before that time the postmaster had contented himself with charging me with the postage of letters. Those above referred to were all on public business, and I wished to take them up; but the want of money obliged me to leave them in the office, where they still remain.

"I entreat the attention of Congress on this subject. Certain officers of the army receive their letters free from postage. The letters of the principal staff must generally be at least as necessary and important; I cannot even conjecture one tolerable reason for the distinction. Nor can I discern any public advantage in the regulation obliging the

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 177, 178.

latter to pay for public letters. There may, however, be very good reasons for it; and I should not attempt to controvert it, were I furnished with the means of complying with it. But, as the matter now stands, I must either obtain my letters by the post, without payment, or, if this be inadmissible, I shall be obliged to direct all my deputies to cease sending me any papers by the post, and to suspend their communications till other conveyances present."

This letter was read in Congress on the 22d of October, and it was thereupon "Resolved, That letters to and from the Quartermaster-General be carried free of postage."*

Journal. — "October 14th. — In the evening the American light infantry stormed and took the enemy's left redoubt on the bank of the river. The French grenadiers took their next advanced redoubt. The former's loss, about thirty-six non-commissioned officers and privates killed and wounded, and five or six officers wounded. The French lost about a hundred troops killed and wounded. This night communications were opened by trenches from the first parallel.

"15th. — The enemy made a sally and spiked a few cannon, with little loss on either side.

"16th. — New batteries opened on the enemy.

"17th. — Lord Cornwallis beat the *chamade*, and offered to surrender.

"19th. — The capitulation was signed."

On the 17th Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife: —

"On this memorable day, in 1777, Burgoyne surrendered. On this present day, Lord Cornwallis has proposed a surrender. A suspension of hostilities has, in consequence, taken place. The negotiation is not yet settled, nor do I

* Journals of Congress, Vol. VII. p. 207.

know the terms proposed. This event is unexpected, and can be accounted for only on supposition that the enemy want provisions or warlike stores, for their works would admit of yet many days' defence; though, on the 14th, in the evening, we took two of their most detached redoubts, which gave us great advantage, and at once brought our batteries near the enemy's.* Cornwallis has made a very feeble resistance: one sally only he attempted, and that a trivial one. I congratulate you, my dear Becky, on the near prospect of the success we wished for. I trust the treaty will soon be closed. This great event will give a happy turn to our affairs, and perhaps by next spring procure peace to America."

By the following letter from Colonel Pickering to General Washington,† it appears that much property, especially tents, surrendered by Cornwallis, was lost through mismanagement, arising from opposition on the part of some American and French officers to the orders of Colonel Pickering:—

"CAMP, October 23d, 1781.

"SIR,

"Agreeably to your Excellency's orders on the 19th instant to me, to take possession of the enemy's public stores pertaining to my department, I went to York myself with my storekeeper, and at the same time desired Colonel Dearborn to go to Gloucester, with an assistant of the storekeeper, for the purpose of receiving the stores."

"At Gloucester the dragoon horses with their accoutrements, and the wagon horses and wagons, were delivered up that day, and the whole committed by Colonel Dearborn to militia guards. The same evening the dragoon horses were driven out of Gloucester and delivered to the care of

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 179, 180.

† In Sparks's "Correspondence of the American Revolution," Vol. III. p. 427.

the Duke de Lauzun's legion; and, by the enclosed certificate and oath of Major Boyton, it appears that no changes were made between the receipt of those horses from the British and the delivery of them to the Duke's legion.

"On the 20th I sent over the superintendent of the horse-yard with a party of men, and a written order, to take charge of the cavalry horses; but Colonel Sheldon told my assistant (Mr. Mix) that they should retain the horses till there was an order from your Excellency to deliver them up. So the superintendent remained at Gloucester. During the 20th and 21st I had persons waiting at Gloucester to receive every species of property pertaining to my department, with a party of men for fatigue and guards. As soon as the prisoners left their tents on the 21st, Mr. Mix applied to the officer of the French guards, and told him his orders and business; but he refused to let him take a tent unless he could produce an order from your Excellency, Count Rochambeau, or General Choisi. The time would not admit of an application to either. Night came on, and the tents were chiefly stolen. In two hours the persons I had assigned for that service would have had them in store. Early that morning I sent Mr. Mix with a note to head-quarters, mentioning the embarrassment given me by the French and the militia guards; but your Excellency was gone to the fleet; though Mr. Trumbull said you had previously written to General Choisi on the subject.*

"Colonel Dearborn informs me that a large proportion of the public stores thus lost (tents particularly) were taken away by the soldiers and women in the British hospitals; so that, of one hundred and ten new tents returned in the Eightieth Regiment, only four or five were left. This information he received from the Quartermaster to that regiment. Some French soldiers were yesterday found there, loading two boats with tents. Colonel Dearborn's coming

* Referring, probably, to the letter since printed in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 182, which requests that every precaution may be taken "to prevent the loss or embezzlement of the *arms*."

probably prevented their completing their design; but, in defiance of him, they carried off what they had got.

“The French have placed safeguards over the houses at Gloucester where the British officers are quartered, so that no American officer on duty there can obtain any shelter, unless in the vilest hovels. I conceive it to be absolutely necessary that these and the French guards over the stores be removed, as well as the guards of the militia; their places to be supplied, as far as shall be found necessary, by Continental troops.

“I request to be favored with your Excellency’s directions respecting the public stores and tents carried off by the people in the British hospitals. Colonel Dearborn will present this, and explain more circumstantially the proceedings at Gloucester.”

By a return, dated the 19th of October, 1781, by Thomas St. John, Assistant Deputy Quartermaster of Cornwallis, there were twenty-five bell tents and seven hundred and seventy-seven soldier’s tents in the possession of the British army at the time of the capitulation. The money in the military chest, surrendered by the British, was two thousand one hundred and thirteen pounds, six shillings, sterling.*

* The following receipt was given by Peter Anspach, the Paymaster in the American Quartermaster-General’s department: —

“YORK, VIRGINIA, 24th October, 1781.

“Received from David Thomas, Esquire, Deputy Paymaster-General of his Majesty’s forces in North America, by the hands of Captain George Vallancey and William Campbell, Acting Deputy Paymasters-General, the sum of £2113 6s. sterling, dollars at 4s. 8d. — being the amount of cash in their possession on public account at the capitulation of the garrisons of York and Gloucester — pursuant to an order from Earl Cornwallis, dated 24th October, 1781, for which I have signed three receipts of the same tenor and date, to serve but for one.

“ (Signed) PETER ANSPACH.

“(Countersigned)

GEORGE VALLANCEY,

WILLIAM CAMPBELL,

Joint Acting Paymasters-General.”

By the ninth article of capitulation* the traders in York and Gloucester were to be allowed three months to dispose of their effects, "the allied armies having the right of preëmption." Notice was given to the traders as follows: —

"This right has not yet been exercised: until it is, and permission afterwards given to those merchants and traders to sell their effects, whoever shall be found to have disposed of any part of them, unless it be to public agents, will thereby infringe the treaty and incur a forfeiture of the whole.

"TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Quartermaster-General*.

"YORK, October 22d, 1781."

About thirty traders sent in lists of their goods; of whom the Quartermaster-General and other officers eagerly bought — partly on public account and partly for their individual use — various articles, amounting in value to more than three fourths of the above-mentioned sum surrendered in the British military chest.

The following extract from a letter from Colonel Lutterloh, Commissary-General of Forage, exhibits his opinion of the nature and importance of the Quartermaster's department. He complains that provision had not been made for a just compensation to its officers, and that its services towards effecting the capture of Cornwallis's army had not received from Congress† a due share of commendation.

"TRENTON, November 24th, 1781.

"I must also beg you will be pleased to consider the situation of us all in your department. We are certainly the worst off. We are obliged to spend our own money,

* Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 535.

† See Journals, October 29th, 1781.

have a great [deal of] trouble, much blame of everybody, and very little thanks or reward to expect. The heads in the staff department have certainly the greatest share of all the proper movements of an army, and its proper existence depends upon the good conduct of that body; but, whenever any public thanks are given, no mention ever is made of our services. The aids of generals commonly run away with great applause, and their service is commonly only to carry messages and feast on plentiful tables, — a business which is in no comparison with ours. While they advance in fortune and high character, we labor under silence for a pitiful pay, which is at an end when we leave the service, and all our troubles are forgotten. . . . There is no proper provision made for a man that serves well. Even the doctors' establishment is better. Their compensation at four dollars a day and half pay for life is an object for a man to look upon as a sufficiency for his troubles. I beg, therefore, you will see if Congress will not grant us a better existence [subsistence]. I must also beg you will get us money. The little sums I received from you and Mr. Anspach are all gone, and more of my own."

Why the Quartermaster-General and the officers in his department should not have had the promise of half pay or commutation, is not very apparent; but their case is not embraced by the Acts of the Old Congress on the subject. This, however, has proved to be a matter of no consequence, as the nation broke its faith with the officers to whom its promise *was* made.

The only entry in Colonel Pickering's journal after the 19th of October is the following: —

"November 6th. — The American troops separated; the Pennsylvanians, Marylanders, and Virginians marching to the southward, and the Jersey and other northern troops to the northward. This day I left the late camp and came to Williamsburg."

On his return from Yorktown to Philadelphia, he wrote, November 30th, to Mrs. Pickering:—

“I arrived here last evening in perfect health. I fear, from what Colonel Miles tells me, that you have heard a groundless report of my having been dangerously ill, which must have given you much unnecessary pain. I was unwell, and for a day or two totally unfit for business, but not in the least apprehensive of danger from it, though it was a bilious disorder, to which the country is subject. In about twenty days I was again in good health, and have since gained so much flesh, that my clothes begin to feel tight upon me.

“The day before yesterday I left the Head of Elk, in the storm, and, in a plain road, where I saw no danger, my sulky was upset by a small stump which escaped my notice. This hurt me a little, and has scratched my face; but two or three days will rid me of complaint from this accident. . . .

“I have not received a syllable from you since Tatham [an express] came to camp near York; and I, on my way hither, recollected that I had been too negligent in writing to you since the surrender of Cornwallis; but the consequent hurry of business and my sickness prevented; and on my recovery I expected so soon to return, that I thought it unnecessary to write. My detention here has been unexpected. How long I shall be kept here is uncertain, as the General is here, and will remain perhaps two months. But I shall endeavor to set off for Newburgh the beginning of next week: at any rate, I am resolved to keep Thanksgiving with you, if I am obliged to come back again to Philadelphia soon after.”

To his brother he wrote from Philadelphia, on the 2d of December:—

“I arrived here the 29th ultimo, in good health, from Virginia. By the 5th or 6th instant I expect to leave this place and proceed to Newburgh, where I left my wife and

children when I went on the expedition to Virginia. I presume she has informed my friends at Salem of her having another son,* born on the 8th of October. . . . After the surrender of Cornwallis, when I found that would close the campaign, I promised myself the pleasure of visiting Salem ; but I fear I shall be disappointed. I must return hither again shortly, as the General stays here on account of the arrangement for the next campaign. On this business I may be detained here during the month of January."

In the following letter, Colonel Lutterloh speaks of a cabal in Congress against Colonel Pickering ; but who were the members engaged in it, or what was the cause of their dissatisfaction, does not appear.†

"BURLINGTON, December 1st, 1781.

"Now, as a friend, — which I hope you take me for, — you have a number, and persons in Philadelphia in the great Council, who work against you. I hope their devilish projects and designs will fall through. General Lincoln is your friend, and speaks in most high terms of you ; which you fully at all times merit. I avoided to go to Philadelphia, on purpose not to bring myself into troubles, into which some speeches and manufactured cabals would have brought me, which I knew were brewing against you."

Possibly Lutterloh's allusion to a cabal against him may have occasioned the air of discontent in the following letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated the 4th of December.

"The date put to this letter reminds me, that this day three years we parted from our friends at Salem, and in just such pleasant weather as this ; but, perhaps, on that side the mountains where you dwell, it may now be cold

* Henry Pickering, born in the Hasbrouck house, at Newburgh, previously the head-quarters of Washington.

† See page 290.

and dreary. How swift the days have rolled along ! What varied scenes have we passed through ! But these, I hope, will make us wiser and better. The more I see of the world, the more I see causes of disgust ; and, were it not for the dear names of *wife* and *children*, I should care very little how short my stay was in it. I write in melancholy mood ; and yet, perhaps, I had never less cause to be cast down ; but trifling matters sometimes discompose us, and we cannot always command our own feelings. I long to be with you ; then I can unbosom myself, and talk over a thousand things. 'Tis a happiness to have a friend to whom I may commit myself without restraint. 'Tis doubtless best for us to meet with causes of disgust : it makes us think of futurity, — an existence hereafter, — freed from the vexations incident to our living here. In that existence alone I look for consolation ; in the faith of that alone I find it, when troubles or vexations affect me.

“ I believe, in a letter written yesterday, . . . I mentioned my return hither, after making a visit to Newburgh, and I knew not but my stay here might then be of long continuance, which induced me to wish to bring you with me ; but I now expect sufficient work will be cut out for me on the North River, and I shall consequently be generally with you at Newburgh. Indeed, after inquiring to-day for a house here for your reception, I found rents so insufferably high, wood and other necessaries in general so extravagantly dear, I was nearly discouraged, before I was informed that public business would require my residing for the most part at Newburgh. This, I know, will be most for my interest, and perhaps (all things considered) more agreeable to us both, than the round of diversions in this city, which are attended with every species of extravagance, in which we must have partaken (however ill-suited to my purse) in some degree, or been pronounced very singular, and have suffered repeated mortifications.”

CHAPTER XXI.

Controversy between Colonel Pickering and the State Agent of New York concerning Forage in West Chester County. — Sufferings in the State of New York from its being the Seat of War. — Views of the State Agent and the Land-owners respecting the Forage. — Their Censure of Colonel Pickering. — His Vindication.

AMONG the many vexations to which Colonel Pickering was exposed in the execution of the multifarious duties of his office, was a controversy with Colonel Udny Hay, State Agent of New York. It related to forage taken by the allied American and French armies from estates in the county of West Chester. Some of these estates had been sequestered or confiscated by the State; others belonged to persons who had fled from them on account of the vicinity of the British troops, and who, in consequence, were locally called "Refugees."

On the 1st of July, 1781, the legislature of New York passed an act authorizing the Commissioners of Sequestration to permit the State Agent to collect any forage or other supplies for the army which might be found on sequestered or confiscated estates in the county of West Chester, to be disposed of by the Agent, like other supplies furnished by the State for the use of the army.

On the 5th of July, Colonel Hay wrote a letter to Colonel Pickering, enclosing a copy of this law, and saying, that he had desired the bearer, Captain William Brown, his assistant, to show to Colonel Pickering his instructions for executing the law. The object of the

law was to make the United States a debtor for the forage taken by the army in West Chester County; but, as the lands lay desolate and waste, having been within the enemy's lines, and if the American army had not encamped there the forage would either have been consumed by the enemy or have perished on the ground, Colonel Pickering was of opinion that the consumption of this forage ought not to create a charge against the United States. He therefore expressed surprise at the communication from Colonel Hay, according to whose statement he refused to pay any respect to this act of the New York legislature. Colonel Hay, in conversations and in letters, insisted that the United States were bound to make compensation to the State of New York and to the Refugees. Colonel Pickering was willing to ascertain, as nearly as practicable, the quantity and value of the forage consumed, and to give certificates of the facts; but he refused to certify — what Colonel Hay demanded — that the consumption of the forage created a debt against the United States.

He wrote to Colonel Hay, from the Camp near Dobbs's Ferry, under the date of July 26th, 1781:—

“I am misinformed if this opinion [that the United States ought not to be charged] is not current in the French as well as in the American army. At the head of the latter I may quote the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief; which, being known, was sufficient to teach me caution how, as a public officer subject to his command, I acted in direct opposition to it. Now, although for an act of injustice no man should find shelter under any name, however great, yet, as an apology for a supposed error in judgment, one may certainly be allowed to quote the opinion of a superior. . . . I am wholly ignorant of myself if either an arrest, — which you have repeatedly held up to my view, — or even the actual

imprisonment of my person, for a debt really or supposed to be due from the United States to any particular State, or any individual subject of it, would at all influence my determination. A seizure of my person or property for a debt contracted by me as a public officer, I should indeed consider as an act of cruel injustice; and, even if it were warranted by law (of which, however, I may at least express a doubt), yet 'tis an act against which the common sense of mankind revolts. . . .

“That any one should imagine I wished to deprive this State of one particle of its property, is doing me great injustice. I have seen its exertions; I have been a witness to its sufferings. I have represented them to Congress. I have spoken of them on all occasions. To Congress I said, ‘The people in the State of New York are under very peculiar disadvantages. Their trade with the neighboring States is so confined, the troops have been so long unpaid, and the public officers there have for so long time past been furnished with so little money, at the same time that the army has drawn thence such considerable supplies, — money, of consequence, must be extremely scarce. For its quota of supplies, not money, but State certificates, were given. In addition to these supplies, the army make large draughts on this State for forage, lumber, wood, &c., and the service of teams; for all which no consideration can in general be given but certificates, and these not receivable in taxes; whereby the inhabitants of that State are exceedingly distressed. There is nothing which the army wants and that State can furnish, that is not taken by impress, when not otherwise to be obtained, which often happens. The people submit to these oppressions (for such undoubtedly they are, though unavoidable) with astonishing patience, partly from a conviction that the articles so obtained are essential to the army, and partly through the influence of the military, who either are in fact, or are expected to be, called to enforce the execution, if opposed. Other States, out of the army’s reach, experience no such oppression. The inhabitants make

their own terms for supplies and services required of them, and, without money or promise of speedy payment, refuse to yield either.'

"To Mr. Morris, the Superintendent of Finances of the United States, I have represented the distress of Colonel Hughes, Deputy Quartermaster, of this State, for want of money, — that his small warrant of twenty thousand new-emission dollars, on the loan office of this State, was not yet paid off; . . . and that 'almost all persons of course remain unpaid for services and supplies:' (then subjoining,) 'These, added to the debts of the old department,* would have long since put a stop to public business here, were there not a peculiar energy in the Executive † of the State, and a military force at hand, to carry into effect every necessary order. If any relief can be afforded, I know not where it can be better applied. It is due to the public officers and to the inhabitants of the State. The United States will also be benefited, for the doing the public business here wholly without money increases the public debt beyond conception.'

"I have said thus much to justify myself from groundless aspersions; and, in a matter so interesting to me as a man, and still more as a public officer, I trust you will excuse me, even if you should deem me tedious."

Colonel Hay, being dissatisfied with the answer to his letter, proposed that the decision of Congress on the point in dispute should be obtained, to which Colonel Pickering assented.

The views of the parties, with some of the measures proposed by them respectively, and the spirit in which the controversy was conducted, are pretty fully disclosed in the letter given below from the Refugees to Colonel Pickering, and his reply.

* Of Quartermaster-General, previous to the appointment of Colonel Pickering.

† Governor George Clinton.

A meeting of the Refugees was held at White Plains, on the 31st of July, 1781, at which it was

“Resolved, unanimously, That a letter be wrote to the Quartermaster-General of the American army, demanding of him pay for what forage, or other articles, he has obtained from either of their farms, and at the same time giving him their opinions of his conduct, as Quartermaster-General.

“Resolved, unanimously, That Colonel Udny Hay, State Agent, prepare a draught of said letter.

“On the said letter being read, paragraph by paragraph, the same was unanimously agreed to.”

This letter, dated at White Plains, July 30th, 1781, was as follows:—

“SIR,

“Astonished at the information of an attempt being made to take by force, for the use of the army, the produce of our farms, without making us the least recompense, nay, even refusing an acknowledgment by which we would obtain pay hereafter, and having met this day and appointed Robert Graham, Esquire, Judge of this county, as our chairman, the Agent of the State, at our request, favored us with a correspondence between you and him, that has fully confirmed the information we had received, and which impels us to tell you, Sir, (for your unprecedented and unwarranted attempt to trample on the laws of that State to which we are subject, and of which we have [been] and ever will be the firm and unshaken supporters, forbids every degree of delicacy,) that we are determined to have full and speedy satisfaction for the insults offered us, by taking such steps as the laws of our country will warrant for compelling you to do us justice; while we cannot refrain from smiling with disdain at the folly of any individual, however high in station, presuming openly, and without the smallest necessity, to set the law at defiance. We, nevertheless, should think it necessary to show our immediate indignation at such a

character, were we not withheld from doing so by that love of our country and regard for the general cause which induced us at first to quit these habitations and these fields which you wish to prove our right and title to extinct.

“Actuated by these motives, and at the particular request of the State Agent, not from the smallest inclination to show you any favor, we shall defer putting the law in execution till the 10th of next month; against which time you will probably have received such instructions from Congress, to whom, we are informed, you have wrote on the subject, as may prevent any further altercation.

“We have carefully read over the Agent’s letter to you and your answer, taken both up by paragraphs, and made the necessary comparisons, and would make no observation, Sir, on the absurdity and childishness of your reasoning, but impute that to the weakness of your head, did not the wickedness of your heart appear too glaring for us to pass over unnoticed, in your attempt to make it be believed your illegal practices have been commenced and pursued in consequence of an opinion received from our illustrious Commander-in-Chief. The well-known character of that great man, his exerted attention on every occasion to support the rights of individuals, the sacred regard he has ever shown to the civil authority and laws of this State, all join in defeating your wish to make us believe he would countenance the infringement of a law, did he even think the law in itself improper or impolitic. Be assured, therefore, we have not the most distant idea of your being able to screen yourself, in an illegal act, under a shield which would give you such importance.

“We have thus, Sir, with that liberty which, as free citizens of America, we claim as one of our most invaluable privileges, declared our opinion of your late proceedings respecting the forage taken by your directions in this county; and our determination is firmly fixed to assert our rights, and rescue our property out of the hands of every invader

thereof, whether under the color of an open enemy, a secret Tory, or a self-interested and designing Whig.

“We have requested Captain William Brown and Mr. Francis Chaudinet to deliver you this letter at your office in camp, and beg your answer, directed to their care at the widow Miller’s, White Plains.

“I am, Sir, in behalf and by the unanimous order of the Refugees of West Chester County, met at Mr. William Field’s, your most obedient, humble servant,

“ROBERT GRAHAM, *Chairman.*”

The preceding letter was accompanied by a long private one from Colonel Hay, dated the 1st of August, insolent in manner, and abounding in misconstruction of Colonel Pickering’s language and conduct.

In his reply to the Refugees, dated at Camp near Dobbs’s Ferry, August 3d, 1781, Colonel Pickering says:—

“GENTLEMEN,

“I received a letter, dated the 30th ultimo, signed Robert Graham, Chairman, in behalf of the Refugees of West Chester County. I should have been more surprised than I was at the contents, had I not believed you had been unwarily drawn into the measure by gross misrepresentations of my character and conduct. Had I not supposed you thus deceived, I should have returned your letter unanswered, the terms of it are so indecent, so improper, so unbecoming the honorable characters you profess to maintain as the supporters of the laws and liberties of your country. But, as your reproaches have arisen from mistake and misrepresentation, I am willing to undeceive you; and this, much more to prevent my usefulness as a public officer being lessened, than from any concern for my personal reputation; for this would sustain no injury from such an attack as yours, in the opinion of any gentleman to whom I am personally known.

“You, Gentlemen, have been made to believe, that I have first knowingly committed an act of palpable injustice, and this, in a case wherein I am totally disinterested, in which I cannot gain or lose one farthing, in which there is no conceivable motive to do wrong!—and then, to cover this unjust act, that I *falsely* accused the Commander-in-Chief as giving countenance to it! You were not aware, Gentlemen, of the enormity of the crimes you have thus groundlessly laid to my charge. . . . By the supposed act of injustice I exposed myself to the resentment of the Refugees, to the frowns of your legislature, and to the displeasure of the whole body of the people of this State. By the supposed false accusation of the Commander-in-Chief, I subjected myself to his indignation, and to be broken with infamy! Yet these are crimes which you have imputed to me; to a man who, for divers years past, has executed several important public offices without the imputation of the smallest crime! to a man who, after such experience of his fidelity, was called by the unanimous voice of Congress to his present office! to a man (to whom indeed you must have been strangers, and whom you should not therefore have so rashly censured) who, from his earliest youth to the present hour, has sustained the reputation of unspotted integrity and truth! . . . Guilt, you are sensible, Gentlemen, implies knowledge. I have doubtless often erred through ignorance and mistake. . . . And it was only for a supposed *error in judgment*, that I sought for countenance in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief. . . .

“Suffer me now to inquire what foundation there was for so much calumny.

“You begin to this effect: that you were informed that I had attempted to take by force, for the use of the army (’tis fortunate that it was not for my own use), the produce of your farms, without making you the least recompense; that I even refused giving an acknowledgment, by which you could obtain payment hereafter; and that the correspondence between Colonel Hay and me had fully confirmed that

information. The word *force*, in the sense in which you use it, seems hardly applicable to the case in question. However, I do not mean to dispute about words. It is a fact, that, when the army marched into this county, every man turned out his horse and his ox to feed where he pleased (excepting into fields of grain, which, I believe, were generally preserved till ripe), nobody appearing to forbid it. After some days (I do not recollect how many), Mr. Brown brought me a letter from Colonel Hay, State Agent, enclosing an extract of a law of this State.* . . .

“I expressed some surprise, for I had entertained the same opinion that generally prevailed in the army, that the forage consumed here would not become a charge against the United States. As Mr. Brown had come instructed to collect the forage, I asked him where he was to carry it; he answered, ‘Up above.’ I asked him if he had men, and tools, and teams to cut and carry it away. He replied that he had not, but depended on the army for those things. This was the substance of what passed between us, as nearly as I can recollect; and, being very busy, I referred him to Colonel Lutterloh, the Commissary of Forage; but (I do not know why) Mr. Brown neglected to call on him. I heard little said on the subject afterwards, till Colonel Hay came down. I believe I repeated to him what had passed between Mr. Brown and me. We conversed some time on the subject, and finally I told him I should not choose to come to a determination until I had consulted the Commander-in-Chief. I accordingly mentioned the matter to his Excellency. He immediately said that he thought the demand a very extraordinary one, or words to that effect. I observed, that the State had made a law concerning it, at the same time presenting him with the extract from it which I received from Colonel Hay. He cast his eyes on it, and said, ‘I think it is a strange (or a very strange) law.’ This conversation I communicated to Colonel Hay.

“Thus, knowing the General’s opinion from his own

* See page 316.

mouth, I did not think myself warranted in giving such certificates as Colonel Hay desired, that would positively make the United States debtors for all the forage consumed by the army in this county. I believe I then proposed that Colonel Hay should himself speak to the General, to get his determination. He afterwards informed me that he did so, but that the General declined intermeddling in the matter, or even giving an opinion on the subject. This, however, was not satisfactory to me. If the case had been so very clear as you seem to think it, why should the Commander-in-Chief, whose justice no one will call in question, hesitate to direct, or, at least, advise me, to give the certificates demanded? This circumstance alone should have rendered you, Gentlemen, more cautious than to have rashly accused me, as you have done, of the infamous crime of telling a *falsehood*, for quoting his opinion as agreeing with my own.

“As to a recompense for the forage, I grant I did not offer any, not being convinced that it was justly due; but that I refused giving an acknowledgment whereby such recompense, if judged right, might be obtained hereafter, is not true. I was willing, to the best of my recollection, even the first day I saw Colonel Hay, to give him a certificate for that end; but he has ever demanded one of a different kind, which, without further inquiry, would make the United States chargeable. In the letter to Colonel Hay, I say explicitly, that, ‘in adjusting this business, I have no other object in view than to avoid an improper charge against the United States. Any certificate of facts, with that caution, I am content to give.’ Afterwards, it is true, I propose a particular form, but subject to alteration if not approved, for I say expressly, ‘in some such form as this’; which plainly implies a willingness to alter it, if objected to. For the purpose of ascertaining the quantity of forage consumed by the army, Colonel Hay proposed two methods: first, to find the number of horses, oxen, and fat cattle belonging to the army, which had subsisted

on forage growing in this county; or, second, to have appraisers appointed to estimate the forage used by the army, distinguishing what was taken from confiscated or sequestered estates, and what from the lands of individuals; according to which certificates should be given. It being thus referred to my choice to take one or the other of these two ways of ascertaining the forage used by the army in this county, I preferred the former, and proposed calling for returns to fix the number of cattle subsisted as above mentioned, according to which certificates should be given that would entitle the owner of the lands to payment, if it should finally be adjudged, by those who had a right to determine the point, that justice required such forage to be paid for. Colonel Hay subjoined a number of questions, to which he desired answers, in case I closed with neither of his propositions; but, as I agreed substantially to the first, such answers were unnecessary.

“Colonel Hay, after reading my answer to his letter, proposed taking the sense of Congress on the affair. I readily agreed to it. He said he would write to the Delegates of the State, and I told him that I would write to the President of Congress. I did so, and ordered an express to be ready to take the letters as soon as his should be brought to my office.

“The business being thus submitted, and at Colonel Hay’s own motion, to the decision of Congress, I confess I was not a little surprised at being presented, six days afterwards, with a letter written with so much acrimony as yours, and could not avoid thinking that much industry had been used to excite your bitter resentment when there was so little ground for it.

“Now, Gentlemen, permit me to ask, In what part of these transactions do you discover any foundation for accusing me of the heinous crimes you have laid to my charge? Besides those already noticed, you speak of my ‘trampling on the laws of the State.’ That is a strong expression, and means a contemptuous disobedience to those laws. But I

am not conscious of any such thing. I have, on the contrary, ever spoken of this State with the highest respect. But suffer me to ask, Gentlemen, whether a particular State may not pass a law which an officer of the United States might justly hesitate to obey. Suppose the army were in Jersey, and that the legislature of that State had made a law fixing the price of hay at twelve pounds a ton (and, being sovereign and independent, it could pass what law it pleased), while New York set it only at six, agreeably to the Act of Congress. Suppose, then, that the agent of Jersey should demand of me certificates for forage, taken there by the army, at that rate: would you think me justifiable in complying with it? Would you not rather think I went far enough in offering a certificate of facts, until the United States in Congress (whose servant I am) should determine whether the price of forage demanded by Jersey should be allowed? But the legislature of New York have made a law authorizing a demand of pay for forage, for which it was generally thought in the army no recompense at all ought to be given. I was of that opinion. The principal officers of the army, whom I heard speak of it, held the same opinion; and, I have told you already, it was the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief.

“Under these circumstances, Gentlemen, what was my duty? What more could I have done with propriety than I have offered to do? Be pleased to bear in mind, that I am an officer of the *United States*, under oath ‘to discharge the trust reposed in me with *justice* and *integrity*, to the best of my *skill* and *understanding*.’ What judgment, then, would you have formed of my attention to the duties of my office, of my ‘justice and integrity,’ if I had pursued the line of conduct required of me, in direct opposition to my ‘understanding’ of what was just and upright, in contempt of the opinion of the principal officers of the army, and especially of the Commander-in-Chief? Yet I do not say this opinion was not an erroneous one: I never said it was not; but it was an opinion, supported as it was by the

authorities I have mentioned, by which I thought my conduct ought to be governed.

“I forbear, Gentlemen, to remark on those reproachful expressions with which every paragraph of your letter is dishonorably marked. I have written this reply, not to retort, not to irritate, but to inform. I have aimed at giving you a true detail of facts, according to the best of my recollection. If there be any circumstance which demands a further explanation, I am ready to give it. I wish only to have my conduct fairly understood. I ask for justice only, and not favor, from any man. Though poor, yet I feel myself perfectly independent. Having neither ambition nor avarice to gratify, I am not even under a temptation, much less am I disposed, to do an unjust or an improper act, knowingly, for the sake of pleasing any man, or any body of men. What appears to be right, whether agreeable or disagreeable to others, I mean ever to pursue. Yet I am not indifferent to the opinion of my fellow-men; I wish my actions to meet with their approbation. To this period I have received, generally, such approbation; yet I never used any species of bribes or flattery to obtain it. I never even asked for any one of the offices I have held under the United States. Yet I have been appointed to three very important offices in succession, one of them under the immediate observation of the delegates of *your State* and of all the members of Congress, for upwards of two years; but, after this, to have unanimously elected me to an office of such magnitude as the present, if I at all deserve the character you have so freely given me, must have shown them to be as destitute of wisdom as regardless of the interests of their country.

“I am, Gentlemen,

“Your much injured fellow-citizen,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Q. M. G.*

“P. S. I have received no answer from Congress on the question submitted to their decision.”

CHAPTER XXII.

Enmity excited by Colonel Pickering's Economical Reforms.—Commendation of his Retrenchments.—Further Proceedings relating to the West Chester Forage.—His Letter to Governor George Clinton, justifying his own Conduct, and censuring the State Agent.—A Suggestion made by him as to Supplies of Food for the Army.

WRITING to Samuel Hodgdon, on the 7th of August, 1781, Colonel Pickering says:—

“Retrenchments and reformatations in the management of our public affairs will (as you suppose) ever meet with my concurrence; notwithstanding I have created not a few enemies by stirring in this business as far as I have. To *you*, as my friend, I can relate an anecdote. Colonel Dayton, the other day, addressed me thus: ‘I heard a handsome compliment paid you a few days since.’ ‘On what account?’ said I. He replied, ‘A gentleman of the Jersey brigade, who had been over to the army, on his return told me that all the other staff departments were making complaints against you;’ adding, ‘I was exceedingly glad to hear it; for it was high time to make retrenchments of public expenses, and I am glad that somebody is attempting it.’

“Since my propositions relative to the commissariats, I have observed appearances in *some* (not *all*) of the staff, which indicated feelings that would give rise to such complaints as Colonel Dayton referred to. I have found that my proposals about the commissariats were grossly misrepresented in the army; and these misrepresentations (and it is not difficult to discern who were interested to make

them) excited jealousies, as though *I* were *ambitious*, and desirous of grasping at every staff department that could be managed without particular professional knowledge. But you will recollect that I was willing to quit the direction, not only of the department if extended, but even of the office I was actually invested with.

“But I have a new set of enemies! stirred up by Colonel U. Hay, because I hesitated to give certificates for the forage consumed by the army in this county, where the lands generally lay desolate and waste. . . . The Refugees, at a meeting where he was present, lately wrote me a letter on the subject, filled with abuse from one end to the other. It was a perfect piece of ribaldry, dictated, I verily believe, by Colonel Hay himself.* I told the bearer of it (one of Hay’s assistants) that, if I treated it as it deserved, I should trample it under my feet. It was signed by the ‘*Chearman*’ of the meeting, who, in the letter, is said to be the Judge of the county. The abuse was so extremely gross, I told the bearer it disgraced the chairman and the Refugees, but not me; that, however, I considered Colonel Hay as the instigator in the whole affair. I confess it at first excited some resentment; but I now view it with the most calm indifference. As these plain farmers have been inflamed and drawn into the measure by Colonel Hay, without being sensible of the impropriety of writing such a letter, I intend going to their next meeting (next Thursday), to give them a plain narrative of facts, and show the cruelty and injustice of their accusations.

“Colonel Hay cannot easily be forgiven; for this proceeding took place three days after it had been mutually agreed between us (on his own motion) to refer the point in dispute to the decision of Congress.”

Colonel Pickering attended the meeting of the Refugees on the 9th of August, at North Castle. To a

* The resolutions of the Refugees (page 320) say as much.

question put to him in writing, whether he would give such certificates for the forage taken as were agreeable to the laws of New York, and consonant to such as he usually gave, he made answer, that he was content to appoint, immediately, one person, the Refugees to appoint another, (these two, in case of disagreement, to choose a third,) to ascertain the quantity and value of the forage taken; agreeably to which certificates should be given, the form of which might be like this:—

“I certify that ——— (hay, grain, or pasturage, whichever it may be), of the value of ———, has been taken, for the use of the American army, from the estate of A B (or a confiscated or sequestered estate), in the county of West Chester.”

He subjoined:—

“As the only point in question has, by mutual agreement between Colonel Hay and me (and at his own motion), been submitted to Congress, I cannot with propriety or decency undertake to determine it, until I am made acquainted with the decision of Congress thereon. Colonel Hay at the same time said he should not think himself bound by such decision.”

The next day a number of the Refugees instructed their agents to apply to the Quartermaster-General, and endeavor, agreeably to his proposal, to determine the value of the forage used by the army, fixing the value of pasture upon the principle that hay was worth about three pounds, in specie, per ton. If the Quartermaster-General consented to enter upon the business immediately, no action was to be commenced against him before the 20th of August, unless an answer should be previously received from Congress, and he should

then refuse giving such certificates as were demanded on the 9th. The agents were desired, on all difficult matters, to take the advice of the State Agent, provided it was not contradictory to the spirit of the instructions.

Colonel Pickering wrote, on the 12th of August, a second letter to the President of Congress, requesting an immediate determination respecting the forage, and stating that the matter had become more serious; that on the 9th instant he attended a meeting of the Refugees, and he had no doubt the whole business would have been amicably adjusted, had not Colonel Hay stirred up their passions whenever they discovered a disposition to listen to moderate measures; that Colonel Hay urged them to commence suits against Colonel Pickering immediately; and that they afterwards grew more cool, and agreed to suspend their suits until the 20th instant, and in the mean time to act agreeably to the proposal Colonel Pickering had made.

On the 13th of August, Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife: —

“I have the pleasure to inform you, that Colonel Hay’s violent proceedings against me are condemned by all the gentlemen in the army whose opinions I have heard; particularly by men of such discernment as Colonel Hamilton and Judge Laurance; * and I am satisfied Colonel Hay is not a little chagrined.”

In a letter of the 14th of August, Colonel Hay proposes a meeting with Colonel Pickering, with three or four mutual friends, in order to discuss the question

* Judge Advocate-General of the army, and from 1796 to 1800 a Senator of the United States from the State of New York.

of granting certificates in the usual form. In this he says he has two views : —

“The first, to bring about a speedy and amicable settlement before the next meeting of the Refugees, without which I will venture to predict there will soon be such a rupture between the inhabitants of the State and you, as will tend further to clog the business of your very important department, already too much embarrassed by unavoidable causes. The second is, that, should you not comply with this requisition, I may have an opportunity of showing them the various proposals I have made and you have rejected.”

Colonel Pickering replied on the 15th : —

“I have already fully explained myself on the subject of your letter of yesterday ; and I am sorry my explanations have failed in any degree to answer my wishes ; which are, to inform and convince those who were strangers to facts, and to put the matter in so clear a light, that the arts of designing men, who desire to foment differences, might be ineffectual.

“Having submitted the matter to Congress, their decision I am bound to wait for and obey. When that arrives, I shall immediately act in consequence thereof. And, lest there should be an unnecessary delay, I have wrote a second time, by express, representing the necessity of, and entreating, their immediate decision. In the mean time, I shall not be intimidated by any threats, for I have, from the beginning, offered to do, in this affair, whatever was consistent with my duty ; and disinterested men, of discernment and candor, acknowledge it. I have also shown every disposition to cultivate harmony with this State, and the citizens thereof concerned in this business ; nor would anything but an adherence to my duty induce me to hazard an interruption of it. But, as I have acted entirely in a public character, without any private views (none such, indeed, can

possibly exist), I am willing to abide the consequences of my conduct."

The next day he wrote again to Colonel Hay : —

"Mr. William Keese, the bearer, is come down for the purpose of joining with such person as shall be chosen by the agents of the owners of the lands where the army have consumed any forage in this county, in making appraisements of the quantities eaten or taken from those lands respectively, and the value thereof, agreeably to the proposals I made at the meeting of the Refugees on the 9th instant.

"I did not consider myself bound by those proposals, seeing they were rejected by the Refugees and you; yet, as my intentions were the same from the beginning, namely, to give a certificate of facts, where required, so I could have no objection, on general principles, to an adherence to the proposals I had made. The ill treatment I have received from you, and, through you, from the Refugees, would indeed warrant, or at least excuse, my throwing every possible embarrassment in your way; but resentment will have no influence on my conduct: I am still ready to take any proper measure in my power to ascertain the quantity and value of the forage in dispute, that the owners of the lands, if pronounced entitled to a compensation, may have the proper evidence of their respective dues. . . . Mr. Keese, therefore, may proceed to the appraisalment of the forage taken from the sequestered lands, as well as the lands of Refugees."

Colonel Hay wrote to Colonel Pickering on the same day : —

"The Assistant State Agents have my orders to fall in with your proposals of the 9th instant for the present, and until I have advice from proper authority to adopt another method."

He says he will not suppose that "the arts of designing men," &c., is intended against him, as his conduct, though warm, has been open and unequivocal ; and he insinuates that every one concerned has not been actuated by principles equally honest and honorable.

From the following letter, dated at King's Ferry, August 26th, 1781, addressed by Colonel Pickering to George Clinton, Governor of New York, it would seem that the arrangement thus acquiesced in by all parties had fallen through.

"SIR,

"I fear your Excellency has heard already too much on the subject of the forage taken by the army in the county of West Chester ; yet, as my character has been unjustly aspersed by some men who have other views than to promote the public good, I think it my duty, holding an office of so much importance as that of Quartermaster-General, to request your Excellency's attention to the enclosed papers, which contain a state of facts, which I also wish to have communicated as you shall think proper.

"Although many observations occur which could further tend to justify my conduct in this business, yet I will waive them, and rely on what is contained in the papers above mentioned ; only begging leave to refer your Excellency to John Laurance, Esquire, Judge Advocate-General, for information of what passed at the meeting of the Refugees on the 9th instant. He will, I doubt not, satisfy you, that, so far from aiming at an amicable settlement, as Colonel Hay had ever pretended, he was the sole cause of preventing it. The Refugees have now no means left of ascertaining their respective dues, for which perhaps they may blame me ; but your Excellency will judge whether it is not rather due to their violent advocate. For, from the beginning of my conversations with Colonel Hay on the subject, I offered to give any certificate of facts, which would have answered every purpose the Refugees could reasonably wish for. However,

as resentment for the ill treatment I have received will have no influence on my conduct towards the proprietors of the lands in West Chester County, so I shall not decline communicating to them any information in my power respecting the quantity of forage taken by the American army from those lands. The entire quantity may be ascertained with some degree of accuracy by the returns of the number of horses and working oxen employed with the army while in that county, — which I will transmit to Colonel Hughes, — and by the returns of fat cattle, which doubtless can be furnished by the superintendent of live stock.

“I have taken the liberty of referring your Excellency to Judge Laurance for information in the case before mentioned, because Colonel Hay will probably produce certificates of the propriety, firmness, and even *decency* of his behavior at that meeting. It may seem strange that a man whose conduct had been evidently governed by those principles should think of getting certificates to prove it. Colonel Hay asked for and obtained them, as I was informed. One gentleman, indeed, who had understanding, candor, and fortitude to think and determine for himself, did not sign it. This was Mr. E. S. Burling, clerk of the meeting. He offered to sign the certificate if the word *decency* were struck out. Your Excellency will judge, from this circumstance, what kind of *firmness* Colonel Hay exhibited, and whether another word would not more properly characterize his conduct at the meeting. Colonel Hay may attempt to palliate all his virulence towards me by haranguing on the *sufferings* of the Refugees, and the *injustice* of depriving them of their property; but I will venture to say, that all his bustle and clamor on the occasion sprung from another source than a tender concern for the interests of the State, or the sufferings of the Refugees, and that the affair of the forage was only used as a handle to promote his private designs. But he has overshot his mark, and convicted himself of having used too much violence, by adopting at last the proposition which I substantially made near a month before.

“Colonel Hay had ever professed a respect for me, and repeatedly expressed his desire to render every assistance in his power to my department. These professions were continued until his receipt of my letter of the 26th of July, and even longer; for he had the art to make the Refugees meet at the White Plains July 31st, and believe that he still wished not to embarrass me, by desiring that their suits might be postponed; and yet he himself wrote the infamous letter signed by Judge Graham in behalf of that meeting! And this letter he doubtless prepared before the Refugees assembled. I observe it was dated July 30th, and the proceedings of the meeting bore date the 31st. This irritating transaction, too, your Excellency will observe, was but three or four days after the matter, on his own motion, had been referred to the decision of Congress for the purpose of effecting an *amicable* settlement! All these proceedings were likewise subsequent to the writing of a piece of scurrility, published in Loudon’s paper* of the 9th of August, which was designed by the writer to represent me in a ridiculous point of light. I do not hesitate to pronounce Colonel Hay the author of it. The style corresponds exactly with that which he exhibited at the meeting of the Refugees on that same day; there are divers references in it to some letters which I wrote to Congress last March on the subject of retrenchments (some of which they were pleased to adopt), and which Colonel Hay unluckily told me he had read when in Philadelphia; and the original appeared in the handwriting of one of his people or dependants. It was left at the printer’s some weeks before it was published, Loudon having refused to print it; but the person who brought it at last insisted on its being printed. The true history of the affair to which this piece alludes is contained in the enclosed extracts of the letters of May 10th to General Washington, and from and to Mr. Tilghman, his aide-de-camp. The plan, however, was not pursued, and I had no other

* Loudon’s “New York Packet,” then printed at Fishkill, but subsequently at New York, after the evacuation of that city by the British troops.

concern in the affair. I do not even recollect to have heard one word on the subject after that day, until I was told the fish * were spoiled and thrown into the river. I will only observe here, that one Monell and another assistant of Colonel Hay's were (as I have been informed) the undertakers to catch and cure the shad for the army.

"As I had never injured Colonel Hay, but, on the contrary, from the character given of him, had thought and spoken of him with respect, I can account for his unprovoked

* The extracts referred to are these : —

Colonel Pickering to General Washington. — "I am informed that about sixty barrels of shad came down yesterday from Esopus. As this article of provision is for an immediate supply, I beg leave to suggest the expediency of bringing down daily all that are caught. Two or three *pettiaugers* may be employed in this service; and, with the wind as it is to-day, they may run from Esopus to West Point in five or six hours; and, if the wind be adverse, they can get down in two tides. If this mode be adopted, the immense expense of salt and barrels, and the great loss of time in putting up the shad, will be saved. If three quarters of a bushel of salt be allowed for salting one barrel of shad, then the salt for the sixty barrels already brought down was worth two hundred and seventy hard dollars; for it sells currently at six hard dollars per bushel, and will probably grow dearer soon. Should six hundred barrels be caught during the season, the salt thus consumed will be worth twenty-seven hundred hard dollars. To this are to be added the price of half the barrels (for probably half will be lost), three hundred dollars, and the price of packing, of the cost of which I am ignorant, but it will be considerable. But in the way here proposed, all these expenses will be saved, and the troops receive daily an agreeable supply of *fresh* provisions, as a change, with their salt meat."

Lieutenant-Colonel Tilghman to Colonel Pickering, May 10th, 1781. — "His Excellency very much approves your plan of bringing down the shad daily, — only taking care to give each cargo as much salt as will secure them against a passage longer than the common calculation."

Colonel Pickering to Lieutenant-Colonel Tilghman, May 10th, 1781. — "Your favor of this date is just received. I know not who has the direction of the shad fishery, and, if I did, I have no authority to put the business in a new train.

"The *pettiaugers* I can order to be got ready to sail at a moment's warning; and, for the security of the fish against the accident you mention (which, however, can scarcely happen), each boat may take and keep on board a barrel or two of salt. But somebody must be authorized to contract for the delivery of the fish from the seine, and an order given for the salt, of which I presume there is already enough at Esopus to answer every demand on the proposed plan."

abuse but on one *principle*, — *his wish to oust me out of office*. Early in the dispute I suspected, from his management, that this was his design, that he might come in as deputy for the State of New York, under some principal who with him was plotting to destroy my reputation, as the sure means of getting me displaced. Some circumstances since made known to me put this almost beyond a doubt. But I cannot avoid despising attempts so basely conducted, because I am sure they will be ineffectual, and because a removal from my office (so it were not with disgrace), far from distressing, would relieve me of a very heavy and painful burden.

“I beg your Excellency’s pardon for these observations. But, while I continue in my present office, it is of public importance that I support my reputation; and it is on this ground alone that I trouble your Excellency with this letter and its enclosures.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

Further Proceedings respecting the West Chester Forage. — The New York State Agent sends a Challenge. — Colonel Pickering refuses to accept it. — His Sentiments on Duelling. — He withdraws the Charges complained of, on finding them erroneous. — He vindicates his Conduct relating to the Forage. — His Views sustained by the French Quartermaster-General.

ON the 7th of September, Colonel Pickering being then on his way to Yorktown on the expedition against Cornwallis, Congress passed a resolve, —

“That Major-General Heath . . . cause immediate and equitable measures to be taken for ascertaining the quantity of forage expended by the allied army, in the county of West Chester, which hath not been accounted for; and that he direct the Deputy Quartermaster in that department to give certificates accordingly to the State Agent of New York, or any other person or persons authorized to receive the same.” *

What progress was made in this business under General Heath I have not learned; but the adjustment of some, if not all, of the claims appears to have reverted to Colonel Pickering. He appointed in September, 1782, John Keese, and in June, 1783, Charles Tillinghast, to attend, on the part of the United States, to the appraisement, by arbitrators, of the quantities and values of the timber, wood, forage, &c., taken by the army from sequestered and confiscated estates in the

* Journals of Congress, Vol. VII. p. 184.

State of New York; and they certified respectively, the one in December, 1782, the other in July, 1783, that the sums found by the arbitrators, amounting to upwards of fifty-one thousand dollars, as the values of property taken from such estates in the counties of West Chester, Dutchess, Orange, and Ulster, were just charges against the United States.

No further correspondence appears to have been held between Colonel Hay and Colonel Pickering until the beginning of the year 1783, when the following letter was handed to Colonel Pickering by Major Nicholas Fish and Major John Armstrong:—

“NEWBURGH, January 15th, 1783.

“SIR,

“The ignominious light in which you endeavored to exhibit my private character and reputation, in your letter of the 26th of August, 1781, to his Excellency Governor Clinton, must be atoned for, either by a proof of the assertions you there make, or in such other manner as it would be equally improper in me not to demand, as in you to refuse to grant. The gentlemen who do me the honor to deliver this will acquaint you with the reasons which prevented a much earlier application on this subject, and I flatter myself they are such as will appear to you not only admissible, but even satisfactory. These gentlemen, too, are informed of the mode of settlement I have determined to adopt, which, having been formed on the most mature deliberation, cannot be receded from; and, if you are equally inclined with me to an immediate settlement upon generous principles, we shall soon have an opportunity of meeting each other. Till then, I am your most obedient servant,

“UDNY HAY.”

Colonel Pickering, on the same day that he received this letter, apparently in order to leave, in case the

affair should in any way cost him his life, a record of his sentiments on duelling, and of his conduct in relation to the challenge, made the following minutes of his conversation with Majors Fish and Armstrong:—

“Newburgh, January 15th, 1783. — Major Fish and Major Armstrong delivered me a letter, of this date, from Colonel Udny Hay, referring to a letter of mine, dated the 26th of August, 1781, to Governor Clinton, in which I enclosed the papers exhibiting a state of the dispute between Colonel Hay and me, relative to the West Chester forage used by the army in July and August, 1781. In that letter Colonel Hay says I endeavored to represent him in an ignominious light; for which, in the letter now delivered me by Major Fish and Major Armstrong, he demands atonement, either by a proof of the assertions I had made in my letter to the Governor, ‘or in such other manner as it would be equally improper in him not to demand, as in me to refuse to grant.’

“The two gentlemen, bearers of Colonel Hay’s letter, said, that, if I chose the first of the two modes above mentioned, Colonel Hay was ready, or willing, to have the matter laid before some officers to be mutually chosen by us; or to admit of a retraction of my assertions.

“We had considerable conversation on the subject, in the course of which I expressed my consent to have the affair laid before officers mutually chosen; that, whenever I had done an injury to any man, I should cheerfully make him reparation; that, when convinced of an error, I thought it infinitely more honorable to retract than to maintain it.

“The gentlemen withdrew to dine, agreeably to their engagements. On their return, after dinner, it appeared that they had seen Colonel Hay. They then showed me a note to this effect, as nearly as I can recollect, namely: that, if the affair were referred to the judgment of officers mutually chosen, and they should decide against me, I should either fight Colonel Hay, or make concessions, and

accordingly write one letter to Governor Clinton, and one letter to Colonel Hay, of which they should be at liberty to make such use as they should think proper.

“On this we (Major Fish, Major Armstrong, and myself) had some conversation, the result of which was to this effect : I repeated my readiness to make reparation for an injury, on its being made to appear ; that so much time had elapsed since the dispute between us had happened, I presumed Colonel Hay’s resentments had cooled, as well as my own ; that the affair would now admit of a temperate discussion ; that if it should appear that I had pronounced my suspicions of Colonel Hay, at which he had taken offence, on too slight grounds (for I had only expressed my suspicions, though, perhaps, in strong terms), I should not hesitate to declare it ; that I presumed Colonel Hay would not demand any mean concessions, neither would I make them, and that I would sooner die than deny the truth ; that I should, if decided to have committed an error, be ready to declare it in a letter to the Governor ; and, as it was observed that a retraction, to do justice, must be as public as the injurious assertion, so I should have no objection to insert in the letter to the Governor the same expression which I used in my former letter to him of the 26th of August, 1781, to wit, that it might be communicated as he should think proper.

“As to the alternative of ‘fighting,’ I was neither afraid nor ashamed to say, that I should not fight. Duelling was an absurd and barbarous practice. It decided not whether a man was, or was not, in an error, and sometimes scarcely whether he was brave or a coward ; that I had no doubt of Colonel Hay’s intrepidity, — I had heard it mentioned in some actions or enterprises at the northward ;* that I had connections too tender to put my life at stake in such manner as was proposed ; that I was a poor man, and had a wife

* At the capture of the fort at Stony Point, in July, 1779, “Lieutenant-Colonel Hay was wounded in the thigh, while fighting with firmness in the heat of the action.” — Thacher’s *Military Journal*, p. 211.

and three children, who would be miserable without me; that, but for these, my attachments to life were very slender; that I was, besides, influenced by principles of religion against duelling; that, from my first knowledge of things, I had ever held the practice in abhorrence, and determined not to give or accept a challenge; that, however, if attacked, I should certainly defend myself; that, if any concessions I should think proper to make were not satisfactory to Colonel Hay, he must then take such measures as he saw fit.

“The gentlemen observed that it was not Colonel Hay’s wish to fight, but to settle the matter in the other way; that duelling was (as I had described it) an absurd thing, which they both condemned, and that nothing but custom could be pleaded in favor of it; that they knew many who were alike principled against it. They said that they interfered as friends, and wished to have the affair amicably settled.

“Resuming the subject, I observed, that I thought I had expressed my sentiments so clearly that nothing could be misunderstood. ‘Very clearly,’ the gentlemen replied. Then, speaking again of duelling, I closed with these words, that ‘I much less feared to die than to offend that Being who had given me existence.’

“T. PICKERING.”

No allusion is found, in the manuscripts of Colonel Pickering, to the subsequent negotiation which must have taken place between him and the friends of Colonel Hay. The unpleasant affair was terminated by the following letter from Colonel Pickering to Governor Clinton:—

“NEWBURGH, March 8th, 1783.

“SIR,

“On the 26th of August, 1781, I wrote to your Excellency a letter, enclosing copies of sundry papers relative to

the forage taken by the army in West Chester County during that and the preceding month.

“In that letter are two passages, which, Colonel Hay observes, detract from his reputation. The subject led me to notice a piece of scurrility published in Loudon’s paper of the 9th of August, of which, for the reasons mentioned in that letter, I supposed Colonel Hay to be the author. I believe every man of candor will think the circumstances there related warranted the suspicion. However, Colonel Hay’s friends have assured me that he disavows it, declaring that he was not the author of it. I am satisfied with the declaration, and withdraw my suspicion.

“In another part of the letter, there is expressed a suspicion that Colonel Hay was aiming, by the steps of which I complained, to get me removed from my office, with a view to introduce himself into the department. This originated in the manner there suggested ; but the circumstances alluded to, which, when the suspicion was raised, and while resentment was still awake, served to confirm it, I see, on a review, are too light to support it. This suspicion, therefore, without hesitation, I retract.

“As divers inhabitants of this State took offence at my refusing to pay for the West Chester forage, and (I am sorry to hear) that refusal is still viewed in such a light by some as to prejudice my interest and reputation, I beg leave, on this occasion, to remark, that in this refusal it was not possible for me to have any personal views ; nor could it be imagined that I would knowingly do wrong, at the hazard of my character, to save the value of that forage to the public ; yet I have been accused of intentional injustice, although I acted in strict conformity to the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, expressed to me on the occasion. This I publicly avowed at the time. But I have since accidentally met with other evidence of it than my own declaration. This is contained in the letter of General Bévillé, Quartermaster-General to the French army, of which I request permission to enclose a copy. This letter was in answer to mine

requesting returns of the horses and cattle of the French army, while they lay in West Chester county, to be transmitted to General Heath, to be communicated to the arbitrators.*

“Under this view of the affair, I persuade myself your Excellency will think me excusable in refusing to acknowledge the United States debtor to the owners of the soil where the forage in question was taken. Certificates to ascertain the quantities so taken, to be produced in proof of their claims, if the latter were admitted by Congress, I did not deny them. I cannot, therefore, but think myself unfortunate to be for this cause an object of displeasure to any individual in the State.†

* The letter from General Bévillé, dated Williamsburg, April 30th, 1782, says, “The foraging of the French army about the camp of Phillipsburg has been in consequence of the orders of Count de Rochambeau, who had been told by his Excellency, General Washington, that we ought to consider ourselves as being upon an enemy’s ground, and behave accordingly, because the greatest part of the country was inhabited by disaffected people, and the former properties of the friends of the cause were by that time, and had been long ago, entirely forsaken. Indeed, the forage which has been moved was nothing but wild grass, and would have remained useless; no value could be fixed upon it.

“In regard to the dry forage already collected in the barns, we have taken it, sword in the hand, on the sea-shore, down upon the Sound, and almost in sight of the enemy, because we knew that the same forage was engaged to be soon after delivered to the enemy. You know, Sir, that it is a constant rule in war not to pay anything for the forage when it is intended for the enemy.

“However, we keep good registers, and are able to produce a right and full account of our consumption, if we are ordered to do it by his Excellency, General Washington.”

† At a later period letters on business passed between Colonel Hay and Colonel Pickering, showing that neither party cherished unkind feelings towards the other. Thus, Colonel Hay writes, on the 12th of August, 1788, “Accept of my sincere congratulations on your return to your family from your late equally extraordinary as unmerited confinement,* and believe me to be, with every sentiment of respect,” &c. In his answer, October 8th, Colonel Pickering says, “I feel myself sensibly obliged by your congratulations,” &c. Again, January 19th, 1792, when Colonel Pickering was Postmaster-General, Colonel Hay wrote, “Should you have an inclination to forward such a measure, and choose to enter into a contract with me [for carrying the

* At Wilkesbarré, in Pennsylvania. See Vol. II.

“The former part of this letter for Colonel Hay’s justification, and the latter for my own, your Excellency will please to communicate as you shall think proper.

“I have the honor to be,” &c.,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Q. M. G.*”

mail from Albany to Canada], it is probable that my terms would not be deemed extravagant. . . . I have the honor to be, with real sentiments of respect and esteem,” &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Difficulty of Communication by Letters in Contrast with Modern Facilities. — Arrangements proposed by Colonel Pickering as Quartermaster-General. — His Public Spirit. — Other Characteristics of him. — Enmity between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and their Reconciliation. — Mr. Jefferson as characterized by Mr. Adams. — Letter-Books and Papers of the Quartermaster's Department. — Proposed Resolutions of Congress respecting that Department. — Colonel Pickering's Objections to them. — Laboriousness of his Office.

THE facility with which the government of the United States, from time to time during the recent attempt of the Southern States to secede from the Union, raised enormous sums of money, presents an extraordinary contrast to the financial difficulties under which the Congress of the Confederation (and, in consequence, the Quartermaster-General) were obliged to struggle. An illustrative instance of those difficulties is exhibited by the following passage in a letter from him to General Washington, in which the failure of the conveyance of letters is attributed to the want of the small amount required to pay express riders.* The emptiness of the public treasury was owing, not so much to the poverty of the country, as to the weakness of Congress, whose powers were overshadowed by the "States' Rights" of the period.

* See also pages 306, 307.

“NEW WINDSOR, January 17th, 1782.

“Colonel Miles has informed me that delays have happened in the carriage of letters from Count de Rochambeau. The most probable cause is the want of money to support the expresses. Before I left Virginia, the chain was fixed from the Bowling Green northward, agreeably to your orders; and, fearing the want of money might occasion failures, I authorized Major Claiborne to apply to this use so much of the money arising from the sale of the stores at Yorktown as should be necessary. He was to sell such only as were not necessary for the public service. Mr. Yeates [Deputy Quartermaster for Maryland] informs me, that the want of money for the riders renders it extremely difficult for him to forward letters through his district.”

In the beginning of February, 1782, Colonel Pickering went to Philadelphia for the purpose of making the arrangements necessary in his department for the ensuing campaign, expecting to stay a few weeks only; but, in consequence of the inability of Mr. Morris, the Superintendent of Finance, to furnish him with the money required for the public service, he was obliged to remain there several months.

In letters of the 8th,* 15th, and 16th of February, to the Commander-in-Chief, he states that a general return in his department is forming, which, from the multiplicity of articles, will be voluminous, and that he will, as soon as possible, complete it and lay it before his Excellency. In the mean time, he submits to his consideration some things on which an early decision seemed requisite.

In some of his suggestions he had regard to economy in the expenditure of the public money. Thus, in concurrence with the opinion of General Lincoln, the

* See Sparks's "Correspondence of the Revolution," Vol. III. p. 477.

Secretary of War, he was in favor of purchasing the ox-teams required for the ensuing campaign, in preference to hiring them; as he found, on making an estimate, that the first mode would be attended with much less expense. Again, the number of horses with the army, he said, was so small, compared with the number when the horse-yard was established, that the care of the yard might be committed to the Wagon-master-General. It was then under the charge of a separate officer, called the Superintendent of the Horse-yard. Further, it had been customary to have a Superintendent of the Roads, to direct the necessary repairs; but he said the good condition of the roads particularly concerned the Wagon-master-General, and to him the direction of the repairs might be left. The Wagon-master-General, he thought, would be able to perform these two services without difficulty. On the other hand, although he confessed it was "an ungracious time to propose measures that would increase the public expenses," nevertheless, he thought it reasonable, and accordingly proposed, that additions should be made to the salaries and to the number of rations of some of the officers in his department. In general, his suggestions met with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief.

A letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated at Philadelphia, February 19th, 1782, manifests a readiness to incommode himself rather than urge his just claims against an impoverished public treasury. Having mentioned that he had drawn upon his brother for a hundred dollars, and upon his brother-in-law Mr. Williams for four hundred, he adds:—

"I have desired some land may be sold, if this draught proved inconvenient to Mr. Williams. I chose to make

this draught rather than *beg* even my dues from the public."

In the same letter he expresses his opinion of a fashion which was satirized by Addison early in the last century, and, after one or more intermediate revivals, has lately been resuscitated.

"There is here a Mrs. Lloyd, an English lady, celebrated for her beauty: she almost engrosses the conversation of the town. . . . She is introducing, I am told, the odious fashion of *hoops*. The emulation of all classes here (Friends excepted) to imitate the extravagance of the prevailing fashions will bring many a family to distress, if not to ruin. I am happy that this circumstance is of so little consequence to me personally, and that you possess a prudence and discretion so perfectly accommodated to my situation.

"I was never more impatient to see you and our sweet boys. I have yet much to do; enough, I fear, to keep me here yet three weeks. General Washington is going to Newburgh as soon as his arrangements here are made; perhaps in four weeks."

He wrote to Mrs. Pickering again on the 21st:—

"Of my private money, received for my bills on Mr. Williams and my brother, I have advanced upwards of a hundred dollars on public account; if, therefore, you should need any money before my return, ask Mr. Anspach to supply you."

On the 24th, however, he sent her forty crowns, that she might "not have occasion to ask any money from Mr. Anspach."

On the 8th of April, the anniversary of his marriage, he gave utterance to his feelings in the following letter to his wife:—

“Hail, happy day! May the sun ever shine upon thee, with rays equally bright and benign! On this auspicious day, my dear Becky, we joined our hands! On this day, as the years revolve, let us ever join our hearts in grateful praise to that kind Providence, which, by a variety of unlooked-for events, effected our union! How much happiness has already resulted from it! How much more do we pleasingly anticipate! Even those untoward circumstances, which, for the moment, occasioned an interruption of it, — the war especially, which has so often, and for so long periods, put us asunder, — will ultimately heighten our enjoyments. We shall better know the value of domestic sweets. Domestic joys apart, the world has no allurements. Possessing them, with health, the world cannot destroy our peace.”

To the minds of many of his contemporaries, Colonel Pickering presented himself only in the character of forbidding sternness; and the idea was countenanced by the general earnestness, and occasionally the vehemence, of his expressions, as well in his speeches and writings as in conversation, against political or other abuses and the authors of them. But many of his letters (some of them already quoted) show that his disposition was marked by habitual benevolence and a ready sympathy. The following passages in two letters to his wife are inserted as evidence of the tenderness of his nature; the rather, as they relate to his son John Pickering, afterwards well known as an American scholar. In the first letter are some just observations respecting the manner of treating children.

“PHILADELPHIA, April 15th, 1782.

“I spent yesterday (Sunday) at the Falls [of Schuylkill]. I took John* with me. General Mifflin and Mrs. Mifflin

* Then five years old.

returned from Reading before night, which gave an opportunity of their seeing John. He pretty readily accepted the General's hand, but I could not persuade him to go to Mrs. Mifflin. He is too much abashed before all strangers; yet, in such cases, he seems to show more of a sturdy, un-complying disposition than of shame [diffidence]. In such cases, most people are apt to be importunate in their questions and entreaties addressed to him; which only makes the matter worse. Besides, not one in fifty uses the soft, alluring tone of fond affection: they do not feel it; and this is not strange. Even those who have children find their affections generally confined to their own offspring; or, if they look on others with any degree of delight, such children must possess some extraordinary qualities of countenance and disposition. Parents are, I believe, too apt to expect a like earnest and fond attention from others, towards their children, as they feel themselves. I have taken some pains to reason myself into a contrary opinion and conduct, as this is to think justly, and is the way to prevent frequent mortifications. . . . Early last evening, John said he wanted to go home, — that is, to Nancy, at our house; and, being urgent, I indulged him, going with him myself. But yet I could not persuade him to stay without me. The moment he discovered that I was going to lodge at the General's, he insisted on going over with me; and I was obliged ('Ah, papa!' you will cry) to gratify him. Before sunrise I rose and left him. He awaked before I returned, got up, dressed himself, and, running into the other room, asked eagerly, 'Where is my papa?' He waited, however, with tolerable patience, till I returned. To wean him a little from this attachment to me, I thought it best to leave him to-day with Nancy; but it grieved me to slip away from him, though he had before half consented to stay, on my telling him I would come up again to-morrow. Always when I have been alone with him, he asked questions and conversed with an air and countenance so sweet, he won greatly on my affections."

“PHILADELPHIA, April 29th, 1782.

“This day, at farthest, I had fixed for my departure ; but Mr. Morris is not ready for me, and desires me to stay still longer, without determining the day when he can let me go. I hope, however, he will ascertain this in two or three days. I am extremely uneasy at this detention.

“I was yesterday (Sunday) at Mr. Peters’s. They have moved to Belmont. . . . I took John with me. After dinner I crossed over to the Falls, and should have returned to town in the evening, if John would have parted with me ; but he cried so piteously I could not leave him ; and he was so jealous of my giving him the slip, that when I proposed going over only to General Mifflin’s, he said I meant to go to town ; and I could not pacify him until I pulled out my watch and left it in pledge for my return. This morning I brought him with me to the city.”

The late John Lowell, Esquire, in a letter to John Pickering, dated “Roxbury, November 8th, 1823,” says :—

“I send you an interesting letter from *your* father to Congress in 1782, a copy of which he sent to *mine*, probably because he was at that time in Congress and your father wished his support in a most just and honorable claim. It shows that, forty-one years since, your father had the same perspicuity of style, frankness, disinterestedness, public spirit, and self-devotion which have marked his *whole* life. . . . I think extracts from it might be very properly and advantageously used ; and surely, when Adams and Jefferson, two originally bitter enemies (or their friends, I know not who) combine to blast his fame, and that of my father, it is time to vindicate both ; not by paragraphs in newspapers, but by *authentic facts* in an *historical form*, which will for ever put at rest all doubts about their public services, and place where they ought to be their accusers.

. . . “When I speak of Jefferson’s *combining* with Mr. Adams, I refer to a late letter from Jefferson to Adams, in

which he tells him he does not think the worse of him for the *horrible* abuse of himself in the Cunningham Letters, and proceeds to frost over his old enemy with the whitest loaf-sugar, interspersed with cornucopias and sugar-plums.*

"Just before Mr. Adams wore ship to follow in the wake of his son, who had just gone in stays,† he said in *my* presence, with great emotion, 'Jefferson is the deepest dissembler and most artful hypocrite I ever knew' — and no man knew him better. Forgiveness is an ennobling virtue.

"I have this moment had Jefferson's letter to Adams read to me by one of his [Adams's] relatives, who was ordered *never to let a copy of it go from him or from his family*. It is, in truth, a queer document. *I refused to hear it*, because I would not be intrusted with a secret. I refused again; but it was insisted upon that I should, and I submitted. It is nothing but that mutual enemies exasperated them against each other improperly, and they had now kissed and made up."

A memorandum by Colonel Pickering, dated the 10th of November, 1823, concerning those papers, says: —

"In a letter . . . from John Lowell, Esquire, to my son, John Pickering, was the following statement [two letters] in my handwriting, done at Philadelphia in April, 1782, during our Revolutionary war. I copy it now, because my letter-books and papers relating to the Quartermaster's department are not to be found. When, in 1787, I moved with my family from Philadelphia to Wyoming, I left in a chest or chests, or trunks, all those books and papers in the office of the Commissary of Military Stores, then kept at Carpenter's Hall, — Samuel Hodgdon the Commissary.‡

* See "Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams . . . and the late William Cunningham, Esq." Boston, 1823, pp. 10, 131, 145, 197; also, an extract from Mr. Jefferson's letter in 'The Life of Thomas Jefferson,' by Randall, Vol. III. p. 493.

† This is an allusion to the conduct of John Quincy Adams and his father in joining the Democratic party during the presidency of Jefferson, on the occasion of laying an embargo.

‡ It seems not improbable that they were afterwards deposited in the office

“The statement was found by Mr. Lowell among his father’s papers; and to his father, then a member of Congress, I must have sent it, that he might be fully acquainted with the subject, and prepared to advocate the claims or support the objections I presented to the committee of Congress, so far as he should deem them well founded, when the report of that committee should be discussed.”

It appears that a report of the committee, consisting of Messrs. Cornell, Scott, and Dickinson, was referred to the Secretary of War, and that, on his report, Congress passed a resolution, April 23d, that supernumerary lieutenants who should accept employments in the staff departments; should be entitled to the pay and subsistence belonging to their rank in the line, as a compensation for their services in the staff, without any other allowance whatsoever.*

The same committee prepared another report, as follows:—

“The committee appointed to arrange the officers in the staff departments of the army, and to fix their pay, on conference with the Secretary at War, beg leave to submit the following resolutions:—

“Resolved, That all resolutions passed before the 22d day of April, 1782, so far as they respect the several grades, pay, and allowances [of officers] in the Quartermaster-General’s department, serving with the armies of the United States, be, and they are, hereby repealed.

“That there be one Quartermaster-General to the armies of the United States, who shall be appointed by Congress,

of the Secretary of War, and were consumed when that building was burned down in 1800. If not destroyed, it is remarkable that the ardor of historical research respecting the Revolution has not brought them to light. Some books and papers relating to the accounts of Colonel Pickering, as Quartermaster-General, have come into my hands since his death; but very few of these have an historical value.

* Journals of Congress, Vol. VII. p. 358.

and receive the same pay as a major-general, and his other allowances shall be the same as those of a brigadier.

“That the Quartermaster-General appoint the following officers in his department, who shall do such duties in the department as he shall direct; to be taken from the line of the army.

“That there be one deputy quartermaster to the Southern army, who shall receive the pay of a brigadier-general, including his pay as an officer in the line of the army, and also the rations and subsistence allowed by the resolutions of the 22d of April, 1782, which shall include what he is entitled to in the line of the army, and forage for three horses.

“That there be one deputy quartermaster to the main army from the line of field officers, who shall receive fifteen dollars per month in addition to his pay in the line, and as many assistant-quartermasters to the main and separate armies as he may think necessary and the Secretary at War approve of, to be taken from the lieutenants of the army, agreeably to the resolution of the 23d of April, 1782, who shall each be allowed forage for one horse.

“That there be two wagon-masters for the main and Southern army, who shall not be below the rank of captain, and be allowed, in addition to their pay in the line of the army, each fifteen dollars per month, and forage for two horses, including what they are allowed in the line.

“That there be two forage-masters for the main and Southern army, to be taken from the line of the army in the same manner, each of whom shall be entitled to the same allowances as the wagon-master.

“Resolved, That Colonel Timothy Pickering be, and he is, continued Quartermaster-General.”

In regard to these resolutions, Colonel Pickering addressed to the committee the two following letters, being the “statement” furnished by Mr. Lowell:—

“PHILADELPHIA, April 27th, 1782.

“GENTLEMEN,

“You were yesterday pleased to put into my hands your proposed arrangement relative to my department. I have read it with attention; and, after the fullest consideration of it, if I give my opinion, I must pronounce it impracticable:—

“Because no gentlemen of the line will undertake some of the most important and burdensome offices for the trifling additional pay to be allowed them;—

“Because among the deranged lieutenants suitable characters to perform many duties of assistants in my department may probably not be found; in which case recourse must be had to the line;—

“Because, the duties of captains and subalterns in the line being light and easy, and not employing a fourth part of their time, they will not quit those stations (which at the same time are posts of military honor) and submit to the constant drudgery of business in my department *for nothing*;—

“Because there are some duties in the department which commissioned officers will think it derogatory to their characters to perform;—

“Because it will compel the dismissal of some staff officers who have served as long, and with as much merit, as any of the deranged lieutenants, and whose experience also in their offices clearly entitles them to a preference for the public good;— and

“Because, by the rules prescribed by the committee, officers who were deranged in 1780, by virtue of the resolves of October 3d and 21st, but accepted offices in my department, must now be dismissed; while, by the same rules, provision is to be made for officers at this time deranged in the manner directed by the same resolves; which, doubtless, will be deemed an unjust distinction.

“I have the honor to be,” &c.

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, Q. M. G.”

To the same committee he wrote again :—

“PHILADELPHIA, April. 29th, 1782.

“GENTLEMEN,

“In stating my objections to the arrangements you have proposed respecting my department, I passed over unnoticed the proposition relating to myself, for I did not observe that it would produce an alteration of the appointments originally granted to me ; but it seems I was mistaken, and that by the expression ‘his other allowances shall be those of a brigadier,’ the committee meant to comprehend only provisions and forage. But to this alteration I have abundant reason to object.

“If the committee will recur to the Journals of Congress of the 5th of August, 1780, they will find the following resolves.* . . .

“These resolutions, I conceive, show sufficient cause why my original appointments should not be changed ; and the committee will probably think it unnecessary for me to offer any other reasons. Nevertheless, I would not rest myself on these resolves, but willingly relinquish a part of my pay, if it appeared to me at all disproportioned to the importance, the duties, and the responsibility of the office. For my views were never mercenary. I never wished to make a fortune in a public office. That I now hold was given me unsolicited, and accepted with reluctance ; for the crisis was too important, the emergency too extraordinary, the embarrassments arising from the public poverty too distressing, to render the office desirable. If a knowledge of the perplexities of Congress on that occasion, if honor or profit, if any private views whatever, had influenced me, I might have made conditions, and obtained terms much more advantageous. But I felt no such disposition. I wished not to embarrass, but to relieve, and therefore accepted the office with such appointments as Congress voluntarily granted me. The committee have proposed that my pay should be the

* Quoted before. See page 251.

same as a major-general's; but I have too little vanity, or too much pride, to feel the least elevation on the comparison; nor do I know why his pay should be the measure of mine, when the two offices bear so slight a resemblance. His is a life of ease and pleasure; mine, of uninterrupted anxiety and toil. For half the year a major-general may be on furlough, and of the other half he may spend three fourths in his private amusements, or the enjoyment of his friends: but with my office such indulgences are impracticable; not a day passes in which I am free from public business or public cares. Though I make no pretensions to military skill, yet I am sufficiently informed of the common duty of a general officer to know that it is extremely light and easy. He may, indeed, be exposed to danger in battle, — perhaps once in a year; and, if he possesses extraordinary talents, having a command, he will then exhibit them, and be rewarded with glory. But I am not exempted from danger. In a general action I must follow the Commander-in-Chief, and be exposed to every hazard that attends his person or the delivery of his orders.

“In regard to the persons necessary to be employed under me, I desire nothing more than will induce proper characters to engage in the public service. I have no attachments to any now in office beyond what their conduct in office has produced. Among them all, one only was known to me previous to my appointment. Where a regard to justice and the public good do not require their continuance, I shall very cheerfully endeavor to supply their places with gentlemen from the line, that, as far as possible, the expenses of the department may be reduced; and whatever arrangements Congress shall adopt I will diligently strive to carry into execution; only, if by blending of characters, or too rigid an economy, some necessary offices become vacant, — for any failure in consequence thereof I shall not be deemed responsible.”

It does not appear by the Journals of Congress that the report commented on in these letters was ever laid before that body. The committee may have been satisfied with Colonel Pickering's reasoning, and so have concluded to let the matter drop. An attempt had been made before, in March, by two members from New Jersey, to reduce his compensation to the pay and allowance of a major-general; but their motion was set aside by the previous question, all but one of the other members voting against them.*

* Colonel Pickering's original pay, independent of rations and forage, was thirty-four hundred and ninety-two dollars per annum; the pay of a major-general, nineteen hundred and ninety-two dollars. By resolutions of Congress of the 23d and 29th of October and the 3d of December, 1782, the pay of the Quartermaster-General was established at two thousand dollars per annum, and the value of his rations at seven hundred and twenty dollars, from and after the 1st of January, 1783.

CHAPTER XXV.

Return of Mrs. Higginson, a Refugee, to Salem. — Intolerance manifested against her. — Correspondence between Dr. Joseph Orne and Colonel Pickering. — Colonel Pickering purposes buying and cultivating Wild Land in Vermont.

COLONEL PICKERING's friend, Mrs. Higginson, having become impatient of her exile in Halifax, returned to Salem before the contest with the mother country was ended.* Finding that the animosity against her still existed, and apprehending persecution from some of her townsmen, she wrote a letter to Colonel Pickering, dated at Beverly, May 28th, 1782, asking for advice and assistance from him and Mr. John Lowell, then a member of Congress. She says :—

“My desire to return to my native land has been uniform ; and, as I advanced in life, I have thought it every year more necessary, as I could not think of leaving one that I ought to provide for, destitute, dependent, and absent from her connections, in case I should be taken away. This, joined with your desire, and the repeated desire of many of my friends here, and the ardent inclination Hetty had to revisit and fix here, brought me last fall to a determination to take the first opportunity to return ; which I should have done then, but the only cartel after that was so crowded that I could not effect my purpose. My friend and father,† Dr. Prince, this spring got permission from Sir Andrew Snape Hammond for the schooner *Patty* to become a cartel ; and, after every legal step was properly attended to, and the strictest attention paid that nothing that could possibly give

* See page 83.

† Figuratively.

offence should happen, I embarked, and, after a passage of four days, arrived in Salem harbor, where I desired the captain to hail a boat, and sent on shore for leave from the Selectmen to land, with my daughter, which was immediately granted; and I was met on the wharf by numbers who gave me a hearty welcome, and the next day I had leave to land my baggage. . . . Thus far I was happy; but, the next day, one or two (for there were no more) made it their business to stir up some, and a certain Doctor of Divinity* was doing all in his power that I might be sent back. My friends thought it best I should go to Boston, and be in the way, in case I should be called on by authority. There, also, I had friends, and waited from Wednesday to Saturday without being notified to appear. On my return to Salem, I found that my being there was disagreeable; and my friends and relations in Beverly had been to see me while I was at Boston, and invited me to see them. On Sunday morning I went there. When I left Halifax it was judged we were on the eve of a peace, and I knew not of a law that would operate against me, but hoped to find you and Mr. Lowell in the Massachusetts, whose friendship I depended on, and whose advice and assistance would have been a support and comfort to me. I came to stay, and am too far advanced in life to take an unnecessary voyage, if I can avoid it without creating a disturbance in the State. . . . I would write Mr. Lowell, but it would be only copying this; for I have endeavored to state my case as exactly as my fatigued situation will permit me, and hope my townsmen will not hurry me to depart out of this State till I can hear from you, which I hope will be by the return of the post."

Colonel Pickering replied:—

"PHILADELPHIA, June 19th, 1782.

"I was happy to hear of your arrival, which the newspapers first announced to *me*, though you were not named;

* The Rev. Dr. Whitaker.

and more happy to know it of a certainty by the receipt of your letter, little suspecting the embarrassments you recite in the last part of it.

“I have been so long absent from Massachusetts (three years and a half), I know very little about its affairs; but Mr. Lowell gave me a very sensible relief, when he informed me of divers cases, clearly much more exceptionable, in the view of the law, than yours, where nevertheless the parties have been suffered to return and remain unmolested. From his account of the matter, I persuade myself you will meet with very little trouble, except from such worthless characters as a certain ——— [Doctor of Divinity], who, conscious of their infamy, greedily seize every opportunity of acquiring some little popularity, therewith to varnish over their crimes and cover their reproach. But the efforts of such wretches will be fruitless against the powerful support of such numbers of gentlemen of the first character and influence in Massachusetts who are your friends; and, if the virulence of that ——— (call him by the name he merits) should urge him to push every *legal* advantage, I should even hope an exception might be obtained in your favor by a special Act of the Assembly.

“Mr. Lowell has promised to write to divers of his friends on the subject, and to enumerate the various cases that have occurred within his recollection, to be advanced as precedents against your persecutors.

“I should be singularly happy to see you and Hetty, but I much doubt whether I shall be able to visit Massachusetts till the war is over. I beg you and her to accept my kindest wishes for your peace and welfare. . . .

“P. S. Mr. Lowell observed that it would be best not to throw yourself in the way of inquiries, or seek any formal admittance, but to be quiet and silent.”

One of Colonel Pickering's early and intimate friends, and by marriage a nephew, was Dr. Joseph Orne, a skilful physician and a man of genius. A

few letters passed between them during the Revolution. In one, dated at Salem, June, 1782, Dr. Orne writes :—

“DEAR SIR,

“I won’t pretend that any of my letters have miscarried, which, you know, is a very common apology for negligence ; for, in truth, I own I have not written to you these two years. I have observed that letter-writing is always taken up by idle people for amusement, or by busy people as business. As we grow old, and our domestic or secular concerns impress our attention, we give less to our friends, that we may have the more to ourselves ; and no juvenile amusement whatever is so generally and so certainly laid aside, as writing letters of friendship and acquaintance.

“But, if I neglect any, I have not forgotten all my friends. I never recollect the many interesting and agreeable hours you and I have enjoyed together, but with a strange mixture of pleasure and regret ; and though, Heaven knows, I would not wish to travel again through this world, yet I would give much to transfer many of the happier scenes of it to this hour, and give them one more cordial enjoyment.

“I am weary to death of this dreadful war. It is attended with such irregular distribution of property, such inversion of order, such decay of morals, so much public distress and private extravagance, that a man who knows and wishes the real advantage of mankind cannot look on the whole without pain. And I own it gives me a melancholy pang every time I reflect that my country will to me, probably, never again be in peace ; for we have been so often disappointed in our hopes, that I have learned to place no degree of confidence in the fine stories told us of the probability of this blessed event.

“I suppose you do not often get a minute account of the state of matters among your friends here ; and, as I feel unusually stupid this afternoon, I can luckily avail myself of your curiosity for the anecdotes and stories of the day at Salem.

"Now, blessed, I say, be those nimble heads (I never had one of them) who can run you through a hundred pages without treading on one matter of fact the whole way. It seems to me as mysterious as for a man to go from one place to another without passing through the intermediate space, — a piece of legerdemain which St. Thomas Aquinas thinks may be a note or two above the address of common devils. I never could get a pair of stilts of this sort that suited my imagination. Whenever I have trusted myself only a moderate distance from good, honest *terra firma*, I have always repented it. . . . I wove this in, my friend, as an interior and inherent mark of the genuineness of this letter, and now return to my matters of fact.

"Your old friend Mrs. Higginson has returned from Halifax; but, as she is liable by law to be sent back again (*sexu non obstante*), and as she is personally as disagreeable to the people as any male absentee, there was so great a ferment among the people, that she is obliged to live among her friends at Beverly. P. H., by the way, poor devil! is sadly reduced; and he is not pitied here. He equipped a large privateer ship to cruise off our harbor, &c. She was unsuccessful, and it hurt him prodigiously.*

"Your brother Williams has lost a great deal of his estate, and it frets him not a little.† I don't much wonder at it, when people have been raised by the war from the lowest indigence to affluence. The old gentleman is puzzled to see into the plan which sinks so good a friend to the Commonwealth into humbler circumstances.

"Your brother John is entirely occupied with the various offices of Register, Town Treasurer, and *Just. Pac.* Since he has released himself from turning the great wheel at

* "P. H." (presumed to be Dr. Prince, a physician, mentioned in Mrs. Higginson's letter, page 362,) was the writer of some scurrilous pieces against Colonel Pickering in the "Essex Gazette," in his controversy with Dr. Latham concerning the small-pox. See pages 41, 43.

† By captures of ships in which he had an interest.

Boston,* John, I think, is much less captious than he used to be. . . .

“This town suffers now pretty severely for the intoxication of past successes. We have almost constantly large men-of-war in our sight, and they take a deal of property from the merchants. For my part, being altogether occupied in administering vomits and other such refreshments,—God help the while,—I slide along merrily enough. Having (and I devoutly thank Heaven for the boon) a wife formed on purpose to make a man happy, when I look round, after so long a shipwreck, and see myself again settled entirely to my wishes, and my children so admirably directed and supplied, and attended with so much tenderness and humanity, I declare, Pickering, I forget I ever was miserable for a moment.

“This letter is long enough. I am afraid you will knit your brows (*ut moris est*) and say, ‘I wonder Dr. Orne thinks I can attend to his stuff.’ ’Tis true you are Q. M. G., and I am without dignity or title; but I am, notwithstanding, your anxious well-wisher,

“J. ORNE.

“P. S. I want to see your young ‘Military Citizens,’—‘Lovers of Truth,’†—&c., &c., &c. I want to see if they have got that good old-fashioned look that my old friend carried away with him; or whether, being born under different stars, political as well as *climatical* (never be afraid to make a word when you are in a hurry), they are not differently moulded. . . . I long exceedingly to see Mrs. Pickering; but I never expect to again, for I imagine now that you will tarry till the war is ended, and I am certain I cannot hold out so long. I am happy to hear that you are settled, at last, in a manner that must be so much more to her comfort than the disturbed life you have sometimes led in the neighborhood of the camp.”

* That is, being a Representative in the General Court from Salem.

† Signatures under which Colonel Pickering wrote in the “Essex Gazette.”

Colonel Pickering answered Dr. Orne in a letter dated at New Windsor, August 18th, 1782.

“The business in which, for two years past, I have been engaged, has left me less time than I could formerly command to write to my friends; and yet, in all that period, I might have wrote often, if my leisure moments had been improved. But I believe you have assigned one true reason of our mutual silence; to which I may add, that, however strong our friendships, however warm our affections, a long-continued separation greatly abates their force. ’Tis almost four years since we took each other by the hand, and in a space short of four years you have forgotten an affliction that drew from us mutual tears! Happy forgetfulness! We should thank Heaven for the boon, which lessens the miseries of human life! I congratulate you, my dear Sir, that you are again so happily settled that you can forget the days wherein you were afflicted; or, if they recur (and we would not altogether lose the power of recollection), the remembrance of them serves but to make the heart more tender, and thence more sensible of present joys.

“I thank you for the remembrance of my wife. I have a most affectionate one, whose highest wish is to make me happy. This has induced a cheerful acquiescence in all the circumstances (some not the most pleasing) of my varied life. Wearied at last with changes, and sick of the vagrant life of a soldier, and her family increasing, I have now fixed, as she wished, her residence for the war. At present she has an agreeable situation on the banks of the Schuylkill, five miles from Philadelphia. I parted from her last Monday. She had greatly recovered from the ill health in which she left the dirty spot where I am now writing. Her three boys were with her, and will furnish abundant scope for her attention, as well as her affections. . . .

“You will, perhaps, be surprised to hear me say that I do not feel that attachment to my native soil with which I

grew up! But I have been absent from it so long, — have seen so many other places where a man may be happy, — and, where my family resides, finding that to be my home, — I should now, with few painful sensations, relinquish it for ever as a place of residence. In that spot where I could find the best support for my family, accompanied with the means of educating my children, there, with satisfaction, I could pitch my tent, and bid to Salem and to Massachusetts a lasting adieu! Not that every part of the Union is alike to me; my affections still flow in what you will deem their natural order, — towards Salem, — Massachusetts, — New England, — the Union at large. I have resided a longer or shorter time in several of the States, and had some intercourse with the citizens of them all. In every place we may form some connections to replace those we lose; and in any place, other circumstances being agreeable, I find I could be contented.

“I am weary of this dreadful war, but shall never live to see the end of it.’ You have not forgot, I see, to speak in hyperboles. But what limits have you set to your existence? Do you expect to quit the stage in ten years? or even in twenty? If Heaven or the healing art preserve you *one*,* I dare venture to say you will see your country in peace. With pleasure I have often looked forward to this period, and ever felt a singular reluctance at the thought of quitting the world before its arrival; but, that arrived, I could for myself, with a degree of resignation, sing, *Nunc dimittis*. Yet I confess my wish to live still longer. I wish to see my country rise in agriculture, arts, and commerce, beyond any former period of her existence; and there is good ground to expect that she will exhibit an instance of rapid and prosperous increase, of which the world can produce no example.

“I have been very angry with you and some others at Salem, that you have kept me in ignorance of every domestic occurrence these two years. . . . I still know but little

* Dr. Orne died in 1786.

of the state of most of the families of my friends, in whose happiness I feel myself interested.

“I do not certainly promise myself a visit to Salem till the war is ended. It will give me great pleasure to see my friends. Some whom I include in that description are yet unknown; but, for the sake of those I know, and to whom they are dear, I value them; and to all, who shall inquire after me, I beg you to present my affectionate regards.”

Although at one time Colonel Pickering had indulged in sanguine expectations of engaging in a profitable business as a commission merchant in Philadelphia, he felt that the want of a larger capital stock than he possessed would be a serious obstacle to success. In consequence, he entertained the idea of purchasing and cultivating a tract of wild land in Vermont, and wrote the following letter on the subject, addressed to General Ethan Allen. No answer is found among Colonel Pickering's manuscripts, and perhaps his letter may not have been sent; but it shows his views, at the time, in regard to his future course of life.

“NEWBURGH, August 4th, 1782.

“SIR,

“Having been engaged in public affairs from the commencement of our dispute with Great Britain, and in the service of the United States since November, 1776, — my employment also having precluded me from the smallest attention to my private concerns, — my circumstances are by this time sufficiently distressing. When I look forward to the conclusion of the war, and view myself with a growing family totally unprovided for, I feel no small degree of anxiety. I see how difficult it will be to insert myself in business in the old States. To begin trade to advantage, a capital stock will be requisite, to which my little patrimony is altogether inadequate; and the public offices to which I might form pretensions are already filled by those who,

having remained at home, were at hand to step into any vacancy as it fell. Thus situated, my only resource is a new country, where lands can be obtained on easy terms; where I can support myself, and make beneficial establishments for my children. These views naturally point me to Vermont, where I shall be happy to become a proprietor; and, though our acquaintance was so transient that you may perhaps have forgotten me, yet your own military character and generous disposition will, I am persuaded, induce you to listen with pleasure to the request of a fellow-soldier. I ask your friendly interposition and recommendation to those gentlemen who, with you, have influence in the councils of the State, to procure me a grant of a township, on the usual terms, or such as the government of Vermont shall have the goodness to indulge me with."

On the presumption that the General Assembly of Vermont would regard the public services of their petitioners, Colonel Pickering states, that, in the autumn of 1776, he was vested with the command of a regiment of militia, raised in the county of Essex, with which he marched to reënforce the main army; and that afterwards he held, successively, the offices of Adjutant-General and member of the Continental Board of War. He says further:—

"In 1780, on the resignation of Major-General Greene, being pressed by the unanimous call of Congress to fill the vacant office, I relinquished my seat at the War Office, and, though it was surrounded with embarrassments at that extraordinary emergency, I consented to take upon me the very important and burdensome, but to me unprofitable, office of Quartermaster-General, which I now hold.

"This detail, I trust, you will not deem impertinent; and your judgment and friendship will lead you to make the proper use of it. If my duty with the army will by any means permit, I shall, before winter, do myself the

honor to wait on you, and gratify my wishes in viewing the rising State of Vermont. . . .

“P. S. I take the freedom to enclose to your care and patronage a petition to the General Assembly of Vermont.”

In April, 1783, he says he has given up the intention of being concerned in lands in Vermont; as the State of New York appeared to be determined to recover that territory, and the security of any grant which he might obtain under the government of Vermont would be doubtful.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Illness of Colonel Pickering's Family. — His Desire to return to Private Life. — Toils and Vexations of his Office. — Taxes. — Sufferings of American Soldiers for Want of proper Food and Clothing.

IN the autumn of 1782, Colonel Pickering was oppressed with the labors and perplexities of his office. He was likewise made anxious by the state of his family, whom, he had flattered himself, he had placed in a healthy and agreeable situation at the Falls of the Schuylkill. The fever and ague became prevalent there, and his wife, one of his children, a man-servant and two maid-servants, were ill, all at the same time, with that disheartening malady. Before their recovery, another child and another man-servant were seized with it, and the unhealthiness of the situation rendered it almost impossible to procure other servants to perform the duties of those who were thus disabled. These labors and afflictions, and his desire to escape from the trammels of office, are spoken of with much feeling in the following passages in letters to his wife and to his brother.

To his wife, under the date of "Camp, Verplanck's Point, September 6th," he wrote:—

"The constant hurry I have been in since this day week (within which the army has moved) has almost prevented my thinking of you; but, when a moment for recollection offers, I please myself with reflections on you and our sweet boys; and this is the only pleasure of that kind which for

some months I expect to enjoy. We have both had great occasion for patience; but the time fast approaches when we shall separate no more while life endures; for I can scarcely contemplate anything with satisfaction but what is connected with the ease and tranquillity of a private citizen. This war once over, I shall wish to abandon for ever all public employments. To mark the progress of my growing trees, the increasing culture of my land, to reap the fruits of my own labor, to enjoy them with you and our smiling offspring, will yield more solid joys than the highest offices, than the most splendid titles, or than princely incomes."

Again he wrote to her on the 12th of September:—

"Last Monday I received a letter from Major Hodgdon which greatly distressed me. By it I found that you and most of the family were sick. He comforted me, however, in the expectation that your indisposition was not dangerous, and that in a week or ten days all would probably be well. God grant it! How happy would it make me could I now sit by you to administer relief with all the tenderness and attention which my affection could prompt! Mrs. Flower is extremely kind; we have reason to value her friendship, as well as Mr. Hodgdon's, for they are real friends in time of need. I hope, my dearest, that you, the children, and family will speedily recover. You must be careful of yourself, and, at all events, get such help about you as will prevent your having occasion for any fatigue: in such a case you must not regard the expense."

In another letter to her, of the 19th of September, he makes inquiries about the produce of the land attached to the house occupied by her, and says:—

"I shall thank Heaven when my family, my fields, and flocks will be my only care. My life at present is a constant scene of hurry, trouble, and vexation, which no per-

sonal considerations would influence me to endure. But the war will not last for ever; I hope in God, not another campaign."

In the following letter to his brother, in which he mentions the difficulties and vexations attending the execution of his office, he likewise commiserates the destitute condition of the sick soldiers, and contrasts it with the luxury indulged in by other citizens. Heavy taxes, he says, are the subject of general complaint. They would seem to be the inevitable consequence of every protracted war.

"CAMP, VERPLANCK'S POINT, September 22d, 1782.

Evening, 9 o'clock.

"I received your favor of last May by Captain Haffield White but a day or two since. He made an apology for its detention. I felt, as I ought, the kindness and affection expressed in it. The public is indeed to the last degree ungrateful; but I recollect once repeating a sentiment, that 'the ingratitude of one's country should not deter a good man from serving it.' Yet many times the trials of my patience are so severe, the difficulties and vexations I am obliged often to encounter are so intolerable, that I am frequently on the point of resolving to quit an office so burdensome and a service so ungrateful. No personal considerations would, indeed, tempt me to continue. My greatest source of relief is in the prospect of a speedy termination of the war. In this view I wish not to abandon the public service till I can enjoy the fruit of so much toil in the blessings of peace.

"The latest accounts inform us of the embarkation of troops at New York, and many circumstances indicate an evacuation of it; but 'tis an event by no means entirely depended on. . . .

"I was astonished at the enormous amount of our taxes which you paid the last year. If all estates paid in the like

proportion, instead of eight millions of dollars, the taxes would reach to as many pounds, besides the internal taxes of each state. Everybody, go where I will, is complaining of the heavy taxes; yet those paid the United States are to the last degree insignificant. Hence I, among other public officers, am embarrassed beyond conception. But that is not the worst. Those brave and deserving soldiers, many of whom have for six years exposed their lives to save their country, who are unhappy enough to have fallen sick, have for a month past been destitute of every comfort of life. The only diet provided for them has been beef and bread, the latter generally sour! while the citizens in general of the United States indulge a luxury to which, before the war, they were strangers! But, with all our boasted patriotism, virtue, and humanity, would a stranger think this possible? Would to God it were not true! Would to God that, in a land blessed with the best food in abundance, the army were not served with the worst! that the sick were not left to perish for want of wholesome diet, or with the cold for want of proper clothing. But few see these distresses, and fewer feel them; hence the wretched are left to endure an increase of misery. But I cease to wound your feelings with this tale of woe. You will regret the occasion as much as I, and both can only lament what we cannot remedy."

He wrote from this place many letters to his wife, from which the following passages are extracted:—

"CAMP, VERPLANK'S POINT, September 24th, 1782.

"I continue in health, but have had such a load of business to go through, and withal so much vexation (more I never endured), that I am greatly emaciated."

"CAMP, October 3d.

"I have been obliged by your letters of the 23d and 25th ultimo. I am sorry that you are like to be the last to feel the pleasures of health restored. Amidst your distress,

had I been with you, I should still have enjoyed some satisfaction, — the satisfaction of attending to your wants, and of administering the means of relief. But, denied this comfort, I am happy that you have not been destitute of friends. The proofs of *real friendship* I expected only from those who have exhibited such striking marks of it. I know you feel towards them all the gratitude their kindness merits, for you have a grateful heart. . . .

“I feel now some regret that you left the North River, for I shall take my quarters in Captain Mitchell’s house, where I can live independently. But, were you to be with me, you would be a witness to all the disagreeable circumstances which attend the execution of my office, amidst clamorous creditors, and the unceasing demands of the army. On the whole, it is (saving this unlooked-for sickness) probably best as it is. I shall strive to be with you part of the winter, and, for this end, endeavor so to arrange my business as to leave it without injury to the public. I have some expectation that the army will go early into winter-quarters. When they are all huddled, I can doubtless leave them for a while.”

“CAMP, VERPLANCK’S POINT, October 7th, 1782. .

“Mr. Hodgdon wrote me the 2d instant, informing that you remained very weak, and that the physician advised your removal to the city, where you might be better attended, saying that good nursing would be more beneficial than his medicines. I hope, my dearest, you have not hesitated to follow his advice, and that you are now comfortably lodged with John at Mrs. Hastings’s. When I objected lately to your removal to the city, as Mr. Hodgdon proposed, I referred only to a lasting one; to a temporary removal, for the recovery of your health, I could not possibly have any objection. In this respect, I beg you, my love, always to follow what your condition shall require. You have prudence on which I can implicitly rely. In what concerns your own health, or that of the children, never

think of the expense: health and life are too valuable to be sacrificed to trifles. If it should be necessary, we can retrieve such losses by a more rigid economy when in full health. Wait not a moment for my advice in cases requiring a speedy decision. . . .

"I remain in good health, and in some measure relieved from the toil and difficulties which deprived me of every pleasure, though I have still some arduous matters to accomplish with very inadequate means."

"CAMP, VERPLANCK'S POINT, October 24th, 1782.

"On the 16th Mr. Hodgdon wrote me that you and the children were on the recovery, and that you were so sensible of gaining strength that you proposed riding out. I was happy to hear this, especially as I considered it as a preparative to your journey to Newburgh. In three days I shall there take up my winter-quarters in the house where Mitchell dwelt. I had not thought it so agreeable, and the situation so pleasant. The house and appendages are already convenient; I shall render them more so. . . . The outhouses will be just what we want. You remember Captain Mitchell had a good garden; that he kept horses, cows, pigs, and poultry, — all that a family needs, — with accommodations for them. Now that I am possessed of these conveniences, and can keep them while the war continues, do you not imagine that I have repented your removal with the children to Pennsylvania, — especially to the sickly banks of the Schuylkill? General Lincoln is here. Three mornings ago I was conversing with him and the Commander-in-Chief. 'You bring Mrs. Pickering and the family to winter-quarters?' said the Secretary at War. 'No; but I have wrote Mrs. Pickering, proposing that she should take a journey to Newburgh, and tarry with me two months, leaving her children and cares behind, as the best means of restoring her health.' 'Has Mrs. Pickering been sick?' said General Washington. 'Very ill.' 'But she will be anxious about the children if she leaves them behind,'

said the General; ‘and I think you had better move your family.’ Could I say nay to a thought so much in unison with my feelings? and will not prudence approve what will so materially lessen my expenses? But the latter will depend on circumstances. Perhaps I shall cease, on the 1st of January next, to be a public officer: if not, the war may end by spring. Either of these events would render a total removal inconvenient. I am therefore at present only solicitous to have *you* take the journey, and to indulge me with your company for two months; by the expiration of which I can doubtless take you back to our children.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

New Arrangement of the Quartermaster-General's Department. — Colonel Pickering dissatisfied as to Compensation. — Importance and Difficulty of his Office. — Misunderstanding between him and Dr. Cochran, Director of the Military Hospital. — Mrs. Pickering's extreme Illness. — Colonel Pickering solicitous about the Means of his future Support. — Financial Inconvenience in paying out Gold Coins.

THE intimation of Colonel Pickering, in the preceding chapter, that on the 1st of January he might cease to be a public officer, is explained by a letter of the 24th of October, 1782, to Mr. Hodgdon.

Mr. Hodgdon had written to him on the 23d of September : —

“The department of which you are principal is now under consideration [in Congress]. A report was formed on it, the 21st instant, by the Secretary of War, for the inspection of the committee long since appointed ; since which nothing has transpired. The above-cited report makes great abridgments in the numbers formerly employed, but is silent on the salaries to be allowed.”

Again, on the 9th of October, he had said : —

“Yesterday your department came under consideration. The report, if accepted, will in general please you. A major-general's pay is allowed the principal. On this I will make no comment. The whole to take place on the 1st of January next.”

He had probably written another letter on the same

subject, which is missing. A resolve of Congress was passed on the 23d of October, establishing the Quarter-master-General's pay at one hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents a month.

To the above letters of Mr. Hodgdon Colonel Pickering replied :—

“CAMP, VERPLANCE'S POINT, October 24th, 1782.

“The reform of the regiments, I perceive, is not absolutely certain ; the C. in C. [Commander-in-Chief] judges it inexpedient and impolitic. General L. [Lincoln] told me *something* of the report about my own department, but not a word of the *pay*, and I would not ask a question concerning it. But what came to me from another quarter convinces me that Congress are not planning any of these reformatations with the candor and dignity which become the representatives of a nation. They know I am a poor man, and thence may think me dependent ; but I thank God I am a stranger to such a sentiment. I am, indeed, a poor man ; but I feel myself perfectly independent. I thank God I have courted the favor of no man ; that I have flattered no man. To some I have made *representations*, but asked no favors. Why should I ? Am I the servant of any individual in power ? Did I accept this office for my own sake ? For the pleasure, the honor, or profit that would attend it ? I call God to witness that I did not. I have served my *country*, under circumstances and emergencies peculiar and extraordinary, and am now to be treated with *ingratitude*. My present pay, large as some gentlemen may think it, is not an adequate reward for the complicated duties of my office ; or, if it is, the salaries of most of the public servants, and of some high in office, are double, triple, and quadruple of what they ought to be. There are three offices in the United States which are arduous and important, — those of the Financier, Commander-in-Chief, and Commander of the Southern army : these excepted, I defy any man to name another requiring half the resource, — that is,

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half so laborious, and at the same time half so difficult in the execution,—as that of Quartermaster-General. The same office in the French army (an army not so large as ours) in point of labor and difficulty is nothing in comparison. He [the incumbent] has no teams to procure, no drivers, no forage, no camp equipage, nor the vast variety of other stores which are required from me; and, particularly, is not required to procure them *without money*. He is not driven to a thousand shifts and expedients, and to make a variety of arrangements which the peculiarity of our service demands, and which keep the mind continually on the rack: yet he is allowed one hundred and sixty-six *louis-d'ors* a month, while Congress are about to reduce mine to as few *dollars*! But Congress may do as they please; yet it behooves them to *do justice*. Will it be said, ‘*He serves the monarch of France, and I a poor republic?*’ Granted. But let America assume the *manners* as well as the *name* of a republic, and let Congress set the example, and then I will cheerfully submit to anything. But I have done. I will not weary you with a longer dissertation on the subject, nor trouble myself about mischiefs to come; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. . . .

“P. S. I take no copies of the letters I write you; if you are at the trouble of preserving them, perhaps some may be eventually of use to me.”

A misunderstanding occurred between Dr. John Cochran, Director of the Military Hospital, and Colonel Pickering, the Doctor complaining, in opprobrious language, that suitable quarters had not been assigned to him and other persons in his department. A letter from him, dated the 4th of November, ended in these words:—

“When you receive this, you will be two letters in my debt: I forgive you the balance, and this shall close the correspondence. Should you conceive your feelings in-

jured by this reply to your scurrility, I am ready to give you any satisfaction you may demand, where pen, ink, and paper are not concerned."

The letter which gave occasion to Dr. Cochran's animadversions has not been found; but that the term *scurrility* was unjustly applied to it by an angry man, I have little doubt. To the one above quoted Colonel Pickering replied:—

"NEWBURGH, November 6th, 1782.

"SIR,

"Although you have given me an acquittance of all obligation to continue our correspondence by letters, yet an unlucky conjecture in one paragraph of your last letter constrains me to reply. I should sooner have done it, but have had too much business on my hands to attend to it.

"You imagine 'my feelings may be injured' by the contents of that letter. Be assured, Sir, they are not hurt in the least: it is not possible they should be; for in all that mass of words, covering almost three pages in folio, there is not a single expression of wit* to excite ridicule, nor of satire to bite, nor of reproach that is founded in truth. As to the latter, your imagination has supplied, or given a coloring to, facts; and opinions so formed (for what in your anger you have written you doubtless believed) will neces-

* This is doing a little injustice to the Doctor; for there is wit, but I suppose not founded on fact, in his remark, "In assigning quarters . . . some of the gentlemen of the department which I have the honor to superintend . . . have been cooped up in a smoke-house, where the only alleviation to their misfortune was the want of fuel, which you, in the abundance of your economical systems, withheld from them."

The irritation on the part of Dr. Cochran must have been but temporary, for, he being in 1788 the Continental loan officer for the State of New York, and being assisted in his office by Peter Anspach, who had undertaken to adjust the accounts of Colonel Pickering as Quartermaster-General, Colonel Pickering wrote to Anspach, "Please to present my compliments to Dr. Cochran, and my thanks for so obligingly receiving my papers into his house;" and in January, 1789, Dr. Cochran sends his compliments to Colonel and Mrs. Pickering.

sarily be erroneous. I therefore, unasked, forgive you all the wrong and all the injury you fancied it could do me. In this spirit I pass over every other part of your letter without an observation, one sentiment excepted, in which you manifest some regret at differing even with *me*. It is, indeed, most pleasant to live in peace with all men : besides, resentments entertained commonly hurt the subject more than the object of them ; and it is particularly disagreeable to be at variance with men whom our employments often unavoidably throw us in the way of. I may add, that a difference between public officers whose businesses have any connection or dependence one on the other, may prove injurious to the public interest. For these reasons *we* ought to live at least on terms of common civility ; more is not absolutely necessary, nor probably will ever exist ; but if there be less, it will not be the fault of

Your humble servant,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Q. M. G.*”

Mrs. Pickering, after having nearly recovered from the fever and ague, had a relapse ; and on the 9th of November Dr. Wistar wrote to Colonel Pickering, “It is Mrs. Pickering’s most earnest request that you may be as expeditious as possible in coming to Philadelphia. Her situation is such, that, unless an alteration for the better takes place very shortly, she must sink under the weight of her disorder in a very little time.” On the receipt of this intelligence, Colonel Pickering set off as soon as possible, and arrived at Philadelphia about the 15th of November. The cheering influence of his presence, if it did not save Mrs. Pickering’s life, certainly had a marked effect in promoting her recovery. He refers to her case in the following letter of condolence to his sister, Mrs. Sargeant, who had recently been bereaved of a daughter, Mrs. Pickman.

“NEWBURGH, February 9th, 1783.

“DEAR SISTER,

“My friends at the eastward have been so deficient in their correspondence, that it was not till the middle of last month that I was informed of the death of Betsey Pickman. I felt and lamented this severe stroke. I lamented for your sake, for her husband’s sake, and for the sake of the tender offspring she left behind her. At any time I should have mourned sincerely the loss of a niece so amiable as Betsey; but I felt it more sensibly when I reflected, and that caused the reflection, on my own escape from a like calamity. The scene of distress from which Providence had so recently saved me, rushed on my memory, and excited every tender sentiment of sympathetic woe. My wife, who was endeared to me by every good and gentle quality a woman can possess, had been some time sick. She was sick when Betsey died, but in the following month was herself on the very verge of death. She was given over by her friends, and even her physicians almost despaired of her recovery. Knowing how difficult it would be for me just then to leave the army, she, bearing her sickness with unexampled patience, did not urge my being sent for. At length, however, doubting herself whether she should recover, with deep anxiety she asked for me. I flew to see her, and, to my inexpressible joy, found her past the crisis of danger, though still confined to her bed, and extremely weak. My presence gave a spring to the powers of returning health, and she recovered with unusual rapidity. While you mourn your own loss, though not as those who have no hope, your affection will lead you to join your joy with mine, that Heaven has restored to me and my charming boys one of the best of wives and tenderest of mothers.” . . .

Colonel Pickering remained in Philadelphia some time after his wife’s recovery, partly for the purpose of conferring with a committee of Congress on the new arrangement of his department, which was to go into

effect on the 1st of January, 1783.* In the following letter to his brother he refers to this subject, and likewise to his future course of life after the termination of the war.

“PHILADELPHIA, December 14th, 1782.

“A new arrangement of the Quartermaster’s department has lately been made. In some respects it is evidently impracticable, on account of the inadequacy of the pay proposed in divers instances, which must prevent suitable characters continuing in or accepting of those offices. I have therefore objected to it, and a committee are appointed for the purpose of reviewing the plan. I expect to have a conversation with them on the subject to-morrow or next day, which over, I shall return to the army, where any letter from you will find me. My quarters are at Newburgh.

“In the summer past I hoped we should not have another campaign; but I now fear we shall. The prospect of peace led me to look forward for some business by which my family might be supported when the war is over, but without absolutely fixing on any, from the contingencies which may happen in the interim to alter my views. I cannot but feel some solicitude on this head; though, while I can get ‘meat, clothes, and fire,’ my mind will not be distressed. I did determine to attempt a visit to my friends at the eastward this winter, and will yet, if it be possible, though I am not sanguine in my expectations of doing it. I want exceedingly to see them; and at the same time I should know whether any and what prospects in Massachusetts (to which I am now so much a stranger) would present to me in the way of business. In the mean time it will give me great pleasure to be informed of the situation of our family in particular. Our mother, I suppose, nearly despairs of seeing me or my family; but I hope we shall all live to meet again. I presume my friends write much oftener than I

* See Journals of Congress, October 23d, 1782.

hear from them (for I scarcely receive a letter in six months); but committing their letters to private hands, they generally miscarry."

From the two following letters it is inferred, that, as Quartermaster-General, he was supplied by Mr. Morris, the Superintendent of Finance, with gold coins from the bank at Philadelphia at their value by weight; that the weights of the coins severally were greater than was required by law for their current value; that hence, in paying them by tale, there would be a loss to the amount of such excess in weight; and that, if he would prevent this loss from falling upon the public or upon himself, he was under the necessity of reducing the coins to the standard weight by clipping them: and it seems this work was to be done either by himself or at his own expense. Although no injury to the public was designed, it is not surprising that he should complain of the proceeding as a "shameful business" imposed on him as a public officer.

The first letter is from Mr. Hodgdon.

"ORDNANCE OFFICE, December 23d, 1782.

"The Financier will not permit the Continent to be a loser by the gold. The consequence is obvious. You must select all the French guineas and leave them for exchange in this city, as well the light as the overweight, as their current value is not equal in the State of York; the other pieces must be clipped. The price demanded is one penny for each piece; but this, it seems, cannot be allowed. It only remains, therefore, for you to say whether you will pay it, or cut the pieces to the standard weight yourself. This last mode has been preferred by Mr. Peirce,* and he informs me it is easily and speedily executed with common shears. Should you adopt this mode, your ingenuity would

* The Paymaster-General of the army.

make the process still easier. The matter should be kept a secret, as the army, not acquainted with circumstances, might suspect fraudulent intentions. I think you had better come in to-morrow morning."

Colonel Pickering returned the following answer:—

"FALLS OF SCHUYLKILL, December 24th, 1782.

"I received your favor by James. If I come to town I shall be harassed with a hundred applications, which may prevent my doing the preparatory business to my setting off to-morrow. Be so good as to leave the French gold at the bank, taking notes for the amount; unless you can get crowns instead, which would in some degree compensate the loss I must sustain on the other gold,—for a loss I am sure there will be after the utmost care. The residue of the gold I will thank you to bring with you in my wagon. . . .

"I must trouble you for the necessary apparatus for *clipping*. 'Tis a shameful business, and an unreasonable hardship on a public officer. I am not certain that I will receive any more bank gold on such odious conditions. A pair of good shears, a couple of punches, and a leaden anvil of two or three pounds weight. Will you inquire how the goldsmiths put in their plugs? . . . Please to get the rates at which all gold coins current here do pass, and at what weights." . . .

Whether Colonel Pickering actually made use of the implements thus requested does not appear: at any rate, he did not save himself harmless; for, in a letter dated Newburgh, January 26th, 1783, to Mr. Hodgdon, he says:—

"I have an opportunity of sending you some bullion; which, with what I left you at Philadelphia, will go near to reimburse me for the loss on the gold received from the bank."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Distress at Camp for Want of Forage. — Correspondence of General Washington and Colonel Pickering on the Subject. — A Prayer, composed by Colonel Pickering. — His Arrest for a Public Debt. — The “Temple” at Newburgh. — Celebration of the Anniversary of the Alliance with France. — Colonel Pickering’s Intention to become a Merchant. — Supposed Views of Great Britain and France concerning the United States. — Peace anticipated.

COLONEL PICKERING left the Falls of the Schuylkill on the 27th of December, 1782, for Newburgh, where he arrived on the 2d of January, 1783. On the way he met with a provoking misadventure, which, however, occasioned only a manifestation of equanimity and of a considerate regard for the feelings of his servant. He notices it in a letter to his wife.

“POMPTON, January 1st, 1783.

“Thus far I am arrived in safety ; and to-morrow I shall be at Newburgh. Some time was lost by the breaking of the swingle-trees and pole of the wagon, about four miles on the other side of Morristown. These accidents happened, one on the back of the other, just as it grew dusky on Sunday evening. Robert said he believed we were *bewitched* ; but I could assign a reason for our ill luck more easily, and without having recourse to *necromancy*, namely, a want of his usual care ; for, while it was yet light, he ran the wagon plump against a large stump three feet high, and, of consequence, easy to be seen, if he had had his eyes about him. This broke both the swingle-trees, and, soon after, occasioned the breaking of the pole. However, I did

not drop a word of blame upon Robert. The most vigilant are sometimes off their guard. Instead of finding fault (Robert himself was not a little troubled with the misfortunes), I cheerfully remarked, that it was ‘better so than worse.’ Perhaps such a reflection in *serious* misfortunes would be one of the most useful consolations; for, in most cases, it is easy to conceive that worse evils might have befallen us, and there are none in which we have not reason, amidst our calamities, to be thankful to the bounteous Author of all good.”

An interesting letter from General Washington crossed him on his journey, in which are detailed distresses at camp on account of the deficiency of forage:—

“HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH, December 25th, 1782.

“SIR,

“The bad state of affairs in your department is such as makes your presence indispensably necessary with the army. The complaints of all, from the Major-General down to the lowest staff officer entitled to keep a horse, are aggravated to the highest possible degree, on account of the continual want of forage. As a specimen of the distress which has fallen under my own observation, you may be assured my horses have been four days without a handful of hay, and three of the same without a mouthful of grain; since which I have been induced to order forage to be purchased with my own private money, at any expense, rather than see them perish before my eyes. But I am now informed it is fourteen days since the horses of the army have had either long or short feed of any kind whatever. All business which ought to be performed by officers serving on horseback must cease to be done. Some of the general officers have sent away every horse into the country; others have notified me that it will not be possible for them to attend at head-quarters on any occasion, even the most pressing, their horses being too weak to carry them, and they unable to

walk so great a distance. Nor can I expect the field-officers of the day to perform their duties any longer.

“There is another public inconvenience which will probably happen, and of which it will be proper to give the Postmaster-General timely notice ; that is, the total incapacity of the dragoon horses destined to escort, or rather to carry, the mail, to proceed any longer. He must therefore expect *that* in which this letter goes to be the last which will be received from the eastward through this mode of conveyance until new arrangements shall take place, as the dragoons were obliged to bring the last week’s mail from Morristown a considerable part of the distance on their backs, and as their horses have had no forage from that day to the present.

“How far these evils are absolutely irremediable, I do not undertake to decide ; but, if they can be avoided, I am certain I need not, in addition to all the other ill consequences, attempt to enforce the ill economy which must result from the unparalleled scarcity, by an example which General Gates has just mentioned, that, for want of forage to the value of five pounds, he has lost a public team of horses worth more than one hundred pounds.

“My principal objects, Sir, in giving you this detail of particulars, are, to convince you that the distresses and clamors for want of forage have never been so great at any former time as at the present moment ; to request you will lay a state of the matter before the Superintendent of Finance ; and, after making the best arrangements in your power to procure a future supply, that you will proceed without loss of time to join the army.

“I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

“G.^o WASHINGTON.”

In a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, quoted below, Colonel Pickering accounts satisfactorily, so far as concerns himself, for this scarcity of forage, alleging, at the same time, that it was not so great as it had been

generally represented to be. Without calling in question the truth of General Washington's statement, that his own horses had not had a handful of hay nor a mouthful of grain for three days, and that General Gates had lost a valuable team of horses from starvation, indicating a sufficiently "bad state of affairs," one may be inclined to doubt the correctness of his information derived from other persons, that "it is fourteen days since the horses of the army have had either long or short feed of any kind whatever."*

In a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, dated at Newburgh, January 12th, 1783, is the following passage : —

"Notwithstanding all that you have read, the want of forage, depend on it, was neither new nor extraordinary.† Just such clamors, from people of irritable passions, I heard as long ago as 1779, particularly from Baron S[teuben]. But all deficiencies of that period are forgotten. The fact was, that in December last the roads were so intolerably bad, the country people could not bring their forage to market, though *actually offered the cash* on the delivery. They would sell at their own barns; but the Continental teams, which had been employed in the bad roads from the time the army moved to winter-quarters, were worn down. I was fully aware of this difficulty, and, when the army took the field last August, kept an office open at Newburgh on purpose to receive and pay for forage, of which I proposed to form magazines, to last till the first of January at least; but I

* The allegation is countenanced, however, by a paragraph in the "Boston Daily Evening Traveller" of April 21st, 1866, in which it is said that a "cruel experiment in France" has shown that a horse can live "twenty-five days without solid food, merely drinking water. He may live seventeen days without eating food or drinking. He can only live five days when consuming solid food without drinking." If this statement is not incredible, it may be presumed that the horses were at rest while subjected to the experiments; whereas those in the army would be used until they became unserviceable, and, in consequence, would be the sooner exhausted.

† For instance, the like want was felt in 1780. See Marshall's "Life of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 216.

never could procure money enough to purchase the supplies requisite for the army in the field. As soon as the snow fell, the farmers readily came in. Colonel Tilghman came to Philadelphia about the middle of December. Speaking of the gentlemen in my office, says he, ‘They do very well.’ Whence you may conclude that the evil complained of was not of long standing.”

Of the numerous letters from Colonel Pickering to his wife, the following is one of the most remarkable. It is dated at Newburgh, Sunday evening, January 12th, 1783. After expressing his affection for her by many terms of endearment, he goes on to say:—

“My heart melts with gratitude to that kind Being who gave us life; who, in ways so unlooked for and extraordinary, effected our union; who formed our minds in the same mould (for in what do we not think alike?) and our hearts with the same tender passions, equally ardent and sincere, — hearts which swell with mutual love — with the dearest affection for our amiable offspring — with sympathy for all mankind — with equal gratitude to our beneficent Creator.

“O thou great, almighty, self-existent Being, by whom are all things; who madest the world and the inhabitants thereof; who didst give us understanding to see and acknowledge thy wisdom, power, and goodness, — all glory be to thee.

“Deign, O thou exalted but beneficent Creator, deign to hear the humble praises, and to listen to the prayers, of thy lowly servants and suppliants. Thou hast condescended to call us thy offspring. O, accept the grateful thanks of us thy children. How numerous are thy mercies, O God! And who can tell of all thy lovingkindness! How wonderful our origin! How feeble and helpless our infancy! How surrounded with dangers our childhood! How exposed to temptations our youth! Yet, O God, we are

supported and preserved. Thy watchful providence has been our safeguard. By thy power have we been protected. And thy goodness hath made us mutually happy. O, still preserve us in our riper years ; prolong our lives ; and let our affection be commensurate with our days. O, accept our ardent thanks that we are indulged with that alleviation to the many disquietudes attendant on humanity. May the happiness we feel in that affection lead us to thee, O thou Source of love. But, while our hearts expand with conscious joy, may we recollect that our abode here is temporary ; that we are but sojourners on earth ; that there is another and a better country, of which those who love thee in sincerity shall become the blest inhabitants. With pleasure, therefore, let us anticipate our departure hence, after we have fulfilled thy wise purposes, O Almighty God, and performed the various offices in life which our stations and connections require. O, grant us the lives of our tender offspring. May we see them grow up in thy fear, and become extensively useful in society. Enable us to perform our duty towards them ; and may we experience all those grateful returns which parental love and filial affection can give rise to. Happy in each other, happy in our children, and blessed with the benignant smiles of thy kind providence, — grant, O most merciful God, that we may attain to a good old age ; and then, if it be thy will, may we not know the pangs of separation. Having our sins forgiven through the atonement of thy Son, our Saviour, and our minds, by the constant practice of piety and virtue, fitted for the society of the happy spirits in heaven, receive us into the mansions of eternal bliss. And thine, O gracious God, almighty and all-wise, shall be the glory. Amen.

“I wrote you, my dear Becky, a letter this day : yet I could not restrain my inclination to dwell on so pleasing a subject, nor forbear to express those sentiments of warm affection which irresistibly urged me to give them utterance. I have been conducted involuntarily to the conclusion which you have just read, and thus, without design, fulfilled my

promise, — to compose and transmit you a prayer; that, though so far asunder, we might unite our hearts in one address to our heavenly Father. If, my dearest, these sentiments accord with your feelings, as I persuade myself they will, let us every day devoutly express them. They will yield us comfort in the repetition, and tend to establish our hearts in piety and virtue.*

“Farewell, my dear Becky. Be Heaven’s peculiar care.”

In allusion to the foregoing letter, he wrote to Mrs. Pickering on the 19th of January :—

“The letter which accompanies this was written, as you will see by the date, a week since; but no good private conveyance has presented. I was sorry for the delay, for I fondly hoped the perusal would give you pleasure equal to mine in writing it.”

In the same letter of the 19th he mentions the receipt of one dated “Salem, the 4th of January,” from his brother-in-law Williams, informing him of losses sustained, by some of his relations, by British captures; also telling him that his mother grows old and somewhat childish, that she mourns the absence of him and his family, and that a few lines to her would please her much. Colonel Pickering says :—

* In the “London Athenæum” for the 12th of February, 1859, is a letter from the late Baron Alderson to his son at school, exhibiting a similarity of sentiment. He says, “I think of you every day, morning and evening in particular, and please myself in thinking, that when papa and mamma are praying for their dear boy, he may be doing so for them. There is a story of two lovers, who agreed at the same hour to go and look at the moon every moonlight night; and that was a tie between them, for they felt as if they were together. How much better is it to be looking, not to the thing created, but to God himself! That is indeed to be together really: to be praying all of us at once to him, is to be, as it were, united through him for ever, and to make a beginning of heaven on earth. My own dear boy will remember this, and we shall not be separated then, but every day be together in spirit, if not in bodily presence.”

"I will enclose you Mr. Williams's letter. You will there see, and regret, the misfortunes of our friends. These, among a thousand others daily occurring, admonish us to beware of indulging too fond hopes of prosperity, even amidst the most promising views. . . . What is there on earth to bind us to it? Nought, my dearest life, but the tender feelings of domestic connections. My wife! My children! These are the endearing names which soften every fibre; which make me forget the numerous ills of life, and wish to live. But is it desirable to reach to great old age? Certainly not. The moment our reason and usefulness begin to fail, we should pray, if it were the will of Heaven, to be taken hence. You will see in Mr. Williams's letter what suggested to me this reflection. In consequence I have written a short letter, of which the enclosed is a copy.* I thought it would soothe and comfort old age. The name of mother is to be respected. An aged mother demands my veneration. You know, too, my dear Becky, who was her darling son! I hope I feel a becoming gratitude for her unbounded tenderness and care.

"I had a large table set yesterday. Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Hand † honored me with their company. They expressed their wishes that you had been here: but what were mine, do you think, my dear Becky? Yet my heart

* "DEAR AND HONORED MOTHER,

"Although the long period of four years has elapsed since I had the happiness to see you, yet I have continually borne you in my memory with that respect and affection which were due to you. I did hope to see Salem this winter, but it is impossible. The war, I trust, will soon end, and then I shall have that pleasure.

"You have been informed of the sickness of my wife and children last fall, and of their recovery. The three boys, I persuade myself, would give you a great deal of pleasure could you see them. The youngest, Henry, I think, resembles you greatly, much more than either of the others. His mamma is of the same opinion. John is grown a lusty fellow. He is thoughtful, careful, and very docile. Tim is active, sprightly, and full of frolic. Harry promises to be what we could wish him. I have given you this account of my family because the relation I know will give you pleasure. I remain your dutiful son,

T. PICKERING."

† Wife of Edward Hand, the Adjutant-General.

is divided ; and when I wish you with me, I check myself, and ask, What then would become of our dear boys? Besides, I do not desire you to be a witness of the numerous disquietudes to which I am exposed. Towards evening, I had just handed Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Hand to their carriages, and turned round to go into the house, when a sheriff presented me with a writ ! It gave me no alarm ; and do not suffer it, my dear, to discompose even your countenance. It was for a public debt, said to be due to a man whom I never saw nor heard of. It seems that he had been buying up my certificates,* and on them grounded his action. I have given bail, and mean to defend the suit to the last extremity. None but men who deserve worse names than I choose to give them would bring such vexatious suits : if it be possible, I will disappoint them. But what a cruel oppression is this, — that, when the public is unable to pay its debts, its innocent servants must be made personally liable ! Congress recommended the prohibition of such suits ; but this State did not adopt the recommendation. With equal justice upwards of ten thousand such suits might be brought against me. If in the end I get into a stronger house than is necessary to hold me, I must send for you to live in the neighborhood. One comfort, at least, will arise, — I shall have a respite from public business, and leisure to pay my attentions to you. Be cheerful and easy, my dear Becky, as I am at this moment : kind Heaven will be our Guardian. Adieu.”

On the 27th of January he tells Mrs. Pickering that he is solicitous to have her acknowledge the receipt of the letters of the 12th and 19th, adding, “ I esteem them more (and I hope you will think them more valuable) than any I ever wrote you.”

Immediately after his arrest, he addressed a letter †

* Specie certificates, signed and issued by Colonel Pickering as Quartermaster-General. See page 256 ; also Journals of Congress, August 23d, 1780.

† See Sparks's “ Correspondence of the Revolution,” Vol. III. p. 544.

to General Washington, mentioning the fact, and that, to prevent any injury to the public by taking him from his office, he had given bail; that the plaintiff, Melancthon L. Wolsey, was said to be a trader at Poughkeepsie, who had been purchasing, at a very great discount, specie certificates signed by Colonel Pickering; that the suit was doubtless grounded on such certificates; and that the State of New York had not complied with the recommendation of Congress to pass a law exempting public officers from such suits.* The letter concludes:—

“I am singularly unfortunate in being subjected to suits on specie certificates; for it was at my instance that Congress passed the act authorizing me to issue them. My motive was to do the best possible justice to the public creditors, by fixing their dues in specie, and allowing them the interest of their money, which I saw it was impossible for the public promptly to pay.”

In a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, of January 21st, on this subject, he says:—

“I will disappoint the vexatious suitor. I will much rather go to jail than show him any public property to satisfy his debt; and, thank God, I have no private property in the State.”

He was not, however, reduced to the alternative of either paying the debt or going to jail. In a letter of the 2d of April, to Mrs. Pickering, he says:—

“With unusual pleasure, my dearest, I now write you concerning myself. This State [New York] has passed a law respecting suits against public officers for public debts, which will insure me from a jail at least eleven months; and the same reasons which they mention as the ground of

* Journals of Congress, March 19th, 1782.

the Act must produce a continuance of it if requisite ; so I am easy on this score."

In the following passages in two letters to his wife, on the celebration of the anniversary of the alliance with France, he speaks of a building erected for the use of the officers of the army, and proposed to be called *The Temple of Virtue* ; but at the dedication it was better named simply *The Temple*,* — a name, however, seldom applied, as in this instance it was, to a *log-house*. It was in this building that Washington afterwards assembled the officers of the army, to take into consideration the noted "Newburgh Addresses."

"NEWBURGH, February 5th, 1783.

"Mr. Lloyd is still here, but will be ready to set off to-morrow if he pleases. But perhaps he will stay to see the review of the troops and the celebration of the treaty of alliance between the United States and France, the anniversary of which fortunate event recurs to-morrow.

"Perhaps you have heard of a large building erecting for the common use of the officers of the army. Dr. Evans, one of our chaplains, was, I believe, its projector. He expects to preach in it on Sundays. The officers expect to have their dancing assemblies there. To-morrow they will meet there to give and receive the congratulations which the anniversary suggests. The Commander-in-Chief has ordered a cold collation to be provided there for all the officers of the army, and the gentlemen and ladies in the neighborhood. If you and I took pleasure in public assemblies, I should wish you there with me ; but such bustling scenes, so far from pleasing, disturb my tranquillity. It is in a small, select society only that we must look for pleasure ; for there alone resort friendship and sincerity."

* See Lossing's "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," Vol. II. pp. 117, 118, where the building is described and represented.

“February 6th, Evening, 9 o'clock.

“I have returned from the ‘Temple of Virtue.’ Alas ! how little will it deserve the name ! for how little virtue is there among mankind ! How small the number whose actions are not dictated by their interest or passions ! With that small number it would be a happiness to dwell. Some such there are in every society. Some such will occasionally enter the army’s public building, and give *color* for the title the good Doctor has chosen for it. He pronounced an oration in it to-day to a crowded audience. The Commander-in-Chief and all the officers were there assembled. Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Hand, and some others of the sex were present. You have lost nothing by being absent. Even the oration fell vastly short of my expectations. Whole years so spent would yield me less pleasure than with thee, my love, one single day. O, indulgent Heaven, hasten the time when we shall meet again, no more to part. But, ah ! my love, what do we promise to ourselves in future time ? You know, that though I am frugal, yet I am not thrifty ; and by my personal industry I must acquire the means of supporting thee and thy sweet boys. Thy diligence also must aid my labor.”

He expresses his opinion that she will be content to dwell in a cottage and not repine at the homely fare their own fields shall supply, if Heaven so ordain ; but his prayers will ask for her an easier lot.

In the early part of 1783 it was supposed that General Lincoln was about to resign the office of Secretary of War ; in relation to which Colonel Henry E. Luterloh, a Prussian, who had recently served as Commissary-General of Forage under Colonel Pickering, wrote to him the following affectionate letter, dated the 11th of February :—

“As General Lincoln’s post is to be vacant, I would advise you, as a friend, to take it. I am well persuaded you can

get it; and I am also certain that the public will have more decisive service done, and you will please the army better, and live happier with your own family. Mrs. Pickering will like it better. And in that post you can make plans for the best [good] of the army, and save the public large sums, which nobody else will be able to do. Excuse my hints, which flow out of a heart that wishes you well. Pray give my respects to Mrs. Pickering, and believe me to be, with great esteem," &c.

In two letters to his brother-in-law, Mr. George Williams, both dated "Philadelphia, February 17th, 1783," Colonel Pickering unfolds a plan of entering into mercantile business. He says:—

"I have been here two or three days on public business. Since my arrival, such intelligence has been received as renders a speedy peace indubitable. This agreeable prospect has determined me to mention, what for some time past I have had in contemplation to propose as soon as the war should be happily terminated: this is, to undertake in this city the management of mercantile business on commission for my friends and such other gentlemen at the eastward as should think proper to employ me. Having spent so many years in the service of my country, personally so unprofitably, and having a family to provide for, my thoughts have been necessarily turned to the means of making such provision where there was the greatest probability of success, as in the business above mentioned. A very considerable intercourse between the Eastern States and this city formerly subsisted, and I suppose will soon be resumed. The connections requisite for this end, I imagine, are not yet generally formed. I am therefore solicitous to have my intentions immediately made known to my friends and acquaintances at the eastward, and that they will do me the kind office to communicate them to such others as they judge can forward my views.

“That a prompt and punctual attention might at all times be paid to the commands of my friends and others, I thought it would be expedient to form here a connection with a gentleman equally disposed with myself to serve them faithfully. This consideration, and a knowledge of his acquaintance with business, has determined me to propose to Mr. Samuel Hodgdon, of Boston, who is well known to you, and who for several years has resided here, to undertake the business jointly with me. This he has agreed to. . . . We are both at present in public service ; but, as soon as peace shall be established, we shall be ready to execute the orders of our correspondents. . . .

“You know my circumstances too well to suffer any merchants to expect, at the commencement of the business, that we shall make any advances. Whatever remittances they shall make, and whatever merchandise they shall consign to us, will be diligently and faithfully applied and disposed of for their benefit.

“It is possible that the Revolution in America may give a new turn even to our home commerce, and that the trade of the Eastern States may be transferred from Pennsylvania to Maryland and Virginia, from whence tobacco, as well as flour, may be now freely exported. I wish you, therefore, to take this into consideration, to learn the opinion of the merchants thereon, and to advise me accordingly.”

Mr. Williams, in his reply, dated “Salem, March 23d,” communicates information and advice, and promises his aid, but says that some of Colonel Pickering’s near friends disapprove of his plan, thinking that he might get a good living in Salem, and that he has been much talked of as a candidate to fill a vacancy then existing on the bench of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts.

Indulging in agreeable anticipations of success in his

commercial project, Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife, in the letter of April 2d,* before quoted:—

“The other cause of my present satisfaction is a letter from brother Williams, which is just come to hand. . . . He informs me that the merchants of Salem will give me their business at Philadelphia, and Andrew Cabot has promised all their business from Beverly. . . . Mr. Williams will speak to the other Eastern merchants as he meets them. He approves of my plan, and says he had often thought of it for me. My brother gives his consent. I had a letter from him a day or two since. He says, if I should go to settle at Salem again, the voice of my country would introduce me to any vacant office; but you know my mind on that head. Upon the whole, my dear Becky, the prospect is pleasing as I could wish; and I trust we shall be able to live agreeably, especially as you have no vanity, and I no ambition, to prompt us to live above our income.”

The following letter, dated “Newburgh, the 6th of March, 1783,” to Mr. Hodgdon, contains speculations of Colonel Pickering on the prospect of peace, and on the probable views and conduct of Great Britain:—

“You ask my opinion about peace. With pleasure I give it. I think it is near at hand. Or, if there be not a general peace, yet I think Britain will cease all hostilities against the United States by *water*.

“Everybody sees how solicitous she is to recover our affections, for the sake of regaining our trade. If the war continues, now that the terms of peace between her and us are agreed on, Britain will endeavor to throw the odium of it on France, to exasperate her own subjects, and, if possible, to inspire us with the like sentiments. Suppose, besides, that Britain should recall her commissions for making prizes

* See page 398.

of American vessels, declaring that no *unarmed* American vessels should be subject to capture, — what would follow? The merchants would, to a man, strip their vessels instantly of all their warlike furniture, and, with the same hands, provisions, and expense, presently fit out double, triple, and quadruple the number of ships and vessels now employed, and with proportionate profits. Thus the British commerce would, in turn, be left unmolested by us, excepting only by our two public frigates, — which would reciprocally be subject to capture; and, with great success, the prizes which two frigates could make would not be worth a minute's consideration. I am speaking now on supposition that the war continues; for we can have no peace by *treaty* without the concurrence of France, though I believe we shall have a peace *in fact*.

“You will readily trace the numerous advantages Britain will derive from such a stroke of policy. We cannot trade directly to her dominions; but her merchants will carry their merchandises to every neutral port in Europe and America, where the American vessels will infallibly receive them, whatever attempts are made to prevent it. This very consideration, too, may have some influence with France to induce her more readily to agree to a peace. And if France, to whom we are under so many obligations, can be satisfied, I confess I care little for our other associates in war. Neither Spain nor Holland had the smallest regard to us in entering into the war: * I feel, therefore, very indifferent about their interests; and Britain has not gained enough from either to affect the balance of power in Europe. The time will come, if we remain united, when we shall hold the scales.

“These hints are enough; nor have I now time to enlarge. . . .

* In an official letter of the 16th of January, 1797, to General Pinckney, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at Paris, he shows that, by their own declarations, this is equally true of the Court of France. See American State Papers, Wait's edition, Vol. II. p. 48.

“P. S. If my conjectures prove true, New York will soon be evacuated, part of the garrison going to Canada, and the rest to the West Indies.”

He wrote again to Mr. Hodgdon, on the 11th of March, upon the same subject, giving the sentiments of two of his old friends (Tories), then in the city of New York.

“I lately wrote you my sentiments in regard to peace. Since then a Salemite, from New York, passing here [Newburgh], showed me some open letters from divers refugees there, among the rest Parson Walter (my old schoolmaster, who sent me his compliments), who says, ‘There will doubtless be peace this summer, *at least with America.*’ Another letter announces, in the strongest terms, the near approach of peace. Walter talks about *staying behind* after the garrison departs, — is assured by his friends he may, notwithstanding he is a ‘proscribed traitor,’ — but says he will not continue ‘if he must encounter sour looks and ill treatment.’ My old chum, Upham, the lawyer, who married Murray’s daughter, is aid to Sir Guy [Carleton]. He has, I perceive, a daughter in Boston, and, in his letter to his friend there, expresses an expectation or hope of returning. Upham is a good-hearted fellow, and probably would not have joined the enemy but for his marriage connections.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

The "Newburgh Addresses." — Letter from John Armstrong, signed "John Montgars," respecting them. — Representations by Armstrong of the Object of the Addresses.

TOWARDS the end of the war great uneasiness prevailed among the officers and soldiers of the American army in regard to the compensation due for their services. In consequence, in the month of December, 1782, a memorial on the subject was drawn up, and a committee of officers selected to lay it before Congress, then sitting at Philadelphia. A report was received from the committee which was not satisfactory to the officers of the army, and on the 10th of March, 1783, the first of the anonymous inflammatory letters, well known under the name of the "Newburgh Addresses," was circulated in the camp at Newburgh. At the same time the general officers, the field officers, and some of a lower rank, were requested, by an anonymous notification, to meet, on the 11th of March, 1783, to consider what measures should be adopted to obtain a redress of their grievances. The Commander-in-Chief, in general orders, reprobated this invitation as an irregular proceeding, and requested the officers to assemble on the 15th, to hear the report of their committee.*

On the 14th, Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife, then at the Falls of Schuylkill:—

"My journey to Albany is delayed on account of a meeting of the officers of the army, which is to be to-morrow, to

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 552.

consider of a representation they shall make to Congress for the purpose of obtaining such decisions as will secure the settlement of their accounts, and the ultimate payment of their debts. If the business is conducted with prudence, it may have the best effects in promoting the success of those salutary measures, proposed and proposing by Congress, for the purpose of establishing such permanent revenues as will insure the payment of the army and other public creditors. In this view the meeting has my hearty concurrence. But should rashness govern the proceedings, the consequences may be such as are dreadful even in idea. God forbid the event should be so calamitous !”

Nearly thirty-seven years later, a correspondence concerning the Newburgh Addresses was commenced by a letter to Colonel Pickering, dated “Albany, January 20th, 1820,” and signed “John Montgars,” in which the writer says he has been employed, for several years, upon a history of the United States, and has brought down the work to the time when the anonymous letters made their appearance ; and he requests Colonel Pickering’s “recollections of this affair.”

Colonel Pickering sent an answer, but, as he had never before heard of a person named *John Montgars*, he declined a compliance with his request. It appeared afterwards, by the acknowledgment of John Armstrong, that the letter was written by him under the assumed name of *John Montgars*.

This correspondence will illustrate the fallibility of memory as to events of distant date, however important, even in persons who were deeply interested in them at the time of their occurrence.

The letter signed “John Montgars” was as follows :—

"SIR,

"I have been employed, for some years past, in writing the military and political history of the United States, and have brought down the work to the last year of the war of the Revolution, when the anonymous letters made their appearance. On comparing the accounts, as well written as verbal, given of the character and object of these papers, I find much diversity of opinion and statement.

"1st. They are represented by some as part of a deliberate and studied plan to break down the civil authority, and to erect on its ruins a military despotism, and that it required the vast influence of General Washington to prevent this dreadful catastrophe.

"2d. That the clamor was altogether artificial, and employed only to give a sort of political and moral finishing to the character of Washington and the army.

"3d. That the letters were projected and written merely as auxiliaries to the fiscal measures of that day.

"Those who hold the first of these opinions appear to rely on some insulated passages found in the letters themselves; on the resolution of the officers rejecting the advice they contained; and on the acrimony with which the General speaks of the designs of the writer.

"Those who hold the second opinion quote only the impunity of the author, the continued friendship and confidence in which he lived with the first officers of the army so long as it remained together, and the succession of high political trusts which he has held since. It is evident, however, that, striking as these facts are, they are not sufficient to justify the conclusion, that a man of Washington's habitual dignity and uprightness would connive at a pantomime of the kind alleged, and much less that he would make himself the Punchinello of the show.

"The third opinion holds a middle place between the solemnity of the first and the levity of the second, and takes as its foundation some highly important and acknowledged facts, to wit, the derangement in the public finances;

the fears and sufferings of public creditors, civil and military; the recommendation of a national impost by Congress as the only efficient means of complying with the public engagements; the adoption of this measure by nine States out of the twelve, and the very pertinacious and highly censurable rejection of it by Rhode Island. Other facts, less known, give this opinion much appearance of probability, particularly the mission to the army of Colonel W. Stewart from the seat of government, and the representations made by him of the prevailing sentiment of Congress and of the Department of Finance, on the necessity of the army's *speaking* a more decisive language than had been hitherto held. But, on this supposition, the difficulty recurs,—why such importance given to transactions of so harmless a character as to *means*, and so useful as to *object*? The supplementary facts, it is said, explain this difficulty. They are stated to be as follows, namely: that, while these measures were maturing, through the agency of Stewart and otherwise, and while appearances justified the belief that the course indicated for the army would be promptly and generally adopted, a letter was received by the Commander-in-Chief from a Mr. Hardy, of Virginia, then a member of Congress, advising him that *a conspiracy of the very worst character, having for object the demolition of our free constitutions, and the destruction of the General's authority*, was in embryo, and would soon show itself in some overt act; and that Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton, &c., were at the bottom of the plan; that information like this, coming from a quarter in the probity and intelligence of which the General placed entire confidence, could not pass unheeded; and that so soon, therefore, as the first Address appeared, it was identified with the schemes of these supposed conspirators, and measures were immediately taken to stigmatize the author, and defeat the advice he had given; that accordingly, when the officers assembled, the Commander-in-Chief opened the discussion with a speech, strongly marked with suspicion of the designs of the writer

or writers; and to show that this was neither hastily nor unadvisedly entertained, he read to the meeting *the letter of Mr. Hardy aforesaid, or an extract from it, containing the statement above given*; and that upon *this* were founded the measures subsequently taken by the officers.

“In this view of the subject most of the difficulties attending it disappear. Hardy’s assertions or insinuations, though no doubt well meant, were ill founded, and led to suspicions which ought never to have been excited. As, however, this conclusion turns altogether on the truth of the facts alleged, and as these may have been misrepresented, my apology for giving you the trouble of reading this long letter, and for requesting from you your recollections of this affair, is purely a desire to see truth prevail; for, in the language of Tacitus, I am able to say, ‘*Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius, nec beneficio nec injuriâ cogniti.*’

“Your answer, by mail, addressed to me at this place, and under cover to Jesse Buel, Esq., will reach me promptly and safely, and confer a great obligation on,

“Sir, your most respectful and obedient servant,

“JOHN MONTGARS.”

CHAPTER XXX.

Statement respecting the Newburgh Addresses, in a Review by Armstrong, in 1823. — Letter to the Commander-in-Chief misrepresented as implicating Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton in a Plot to displace him. — The Part taken by Colonel Pickering relative to the Newburgh Addresses. — Letter purporting to be written in 1797 by Washington to Armstrong. — Its Genuineness questioned. — Recollections and Reasonings of Colonel Pickering and Governor Brooks respecting the Addresses. — Armstrong's Reasons for using the Signature "Montgars." — Dr. Eustis accused of writing the Addresses.

No further notice was taken by Colonel Pickering of Armstrong's letter until after the appearance, in "The United States Magazine and Literary and Political Repository" for January, 1823, of a review of Johnson's "Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene, Major-General," &c. In this review it is said, that, in the autumn of 1782, a memorial to Congress was drawn up, representing the sufferings of the army on account of their pay being in arrear, and asking for relief; — that Major-General McDougall, and Colonel Ogden, and Colonel Brooks* were selected as a committee to present the memorial; — that on the 25th of January, 1783, a committee of Congress made a report upon the memorial, and thereupon Congress passed certain resolutions; † — that a report to the army from their committee attending on Congress was received early in March,

* Afterwards Governor of Massachusetts.

† See Journals of Congress, January 25th, 1783.

declaring the inauspicious aspect of the moment in relation to their commission ;* — that the communication of this report to the army was thought to present a fit occasion for assembling the officers, and for passing a series of resolutions, which, in the hands of their committee and of their auxiliaries in Congress, would furnish a new and powerful lever for operating on the two States which had refused their assent to the application of Congress for power to levy a duty of five per cent. on imported goods ; — but that, “ to this end, there was yet wanting the interposition of a hand which should touch with some ability the several chords of sympathy and feeling that belonged to the case, and thus secure to the deliberations and their result that tone and energy without which they would be a dead letter ; ” — and that Armstrong, “ yielding to the solicitations of his friends, in a few hours produced an address, which was believed to be peculiarly adapted to its object. Nor, according to the historian, was its effect less distinguished than its reception ; for, besides being approved and applauded, all appeared to be ready to act on the advice it contained.”

The reviewer then mentions, that the Commander-in-Chief had received a letter from Mr. Harvie,† of Virginia, informing him that a plan was matured at the seat of government aiming professedly at establishing public credit, and supporting national authority, but that its real object was to overturn republicanism, and to build on its ruins a government of despotic or monarchical character ; that a part of the plan was to put in the place of Washington, as Commander-in-Chief, some one,

* Sparks's " Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 551, 552.

† In the letter of " Montgars " it is *Hardy*. Two members of Congress from Virginia were named, respectively, *Hardy* and *Harvie*.

who, holding from the faction, would be better disposed to support their projects ; and that agents were already employed with the army to accomplish these purposes. "Nor," continues the reviewer, "did the writer stop here : he went on to indicate the authors of the plan, and pointed distinctly at Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton."

The reviewer further says, that this communication, "though utterly unfounded in the facts it assumed," excited in Washington "a momentary alarm for himself and his country."

"Under its impulse, he identified the *Address* with the machinations of his enemies, ascribed it to the pen of one or more of the imaginary triumvirate, and denounced it as the first step in the progress and development of a deep and dangerous conspiracy. When, on the 15th of March, 1783, the army had assembled under the general order of the 11th, this extraordinary letter was not merely referred to, but publicly produced, and read, and commented on, by the Commander-in-Chief, and, substantially, became the basis of the proceedings of that memorable day. We ask, then, how it has happened, that a document so important, and which alone furnishes a clew to the conduct and opinions of both the General and the army on that important occasion, should not have been mentioned by any chronicler of the times, or biographer of Washington."

The reviewer answers his own question by supposing that the letter must have escaped their research ; and he conjectures that it was destroyed by Washington himself, under a conviction of its errors and injustice, in order to prevent it from doing further injury. As circumstances in support of his conjecture, he mentions the particular esteem and confidence with which Washington subsequently regarded the Morris and Ham-

ilton, and the offer made by him of a high employment ("not accepted") "to the acknowledged author of these very Addresses." In a note (page 43) he says:—

"To these circumstances, and with the same view, we may add, that Timothy Pickering (then Quartermaster-General, and, if we do not mistake, the only person who, on the 15th of March, opposed himself to the course recommended by Washington and adopted by the army) became, at a subsequent period, his Secretary of War."

Near the close of the review is a letter purporting to be from Washington to Armstrong, as follows:—

"PHILADELPHIA, 23d February, 1797.

"SIR,

"Believing that there may be times and occasions on which my opinion of the anonymous letters and their author, as delivered to the army in the year 1783, may be turned to some personal and malignant purpose, I do hereby declare, that I did not, at the time of writing my address, regard you as the author of the said anonymous letters; and further, that I have since had sufficient reason for believing that the object of the author was just, honorable, and friendly to the country, though the means suggested by him were certainly liable to much misunderstanding and abuse.

"I am, Sir, with great regard, your most obedient servant,

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

After reading the review, Colonel Pickering wrote, May 6th, 1823, to Governor Brooks, requesting his recollections concerning the Addresses, and saying, that Judge Johnson has ascribed them to Gouverneur Morris;*

* Governor Brooks, in his answer, says, "Judge Johnson's hypothesis . . . is destitute of support. In reference to the second letter, the thing was impossible, as the Judge ought to have known. Mr. Morris was at the time in Philadelphia. The general order noticing the first letter was issued on the 11th of March, 1783, and the next morning the second letter appeared."

that his reasoning on the subject is absurd in the extreme; that the review above mentioned, of which Armstrong was doubtless the author, had appeared, wherein it was stated that the letters were written by Armstrong; and that he (Colonel Pickering), and he supposed every officer in the army, had never doubted it. He thinks that, if the extraordinary letter from Harvie had been read to the officers, he should have remembered it; but he cannot recollect that Washington read anything besides his address. And as to his (Colonel Pickering's) being the only person who opposed the course recommended by Washington, he says:—

“Now, my memory must have greatly failed me indeed, if there was any opposition from any quarter; and surely not from me, who had no interest in the question which so deeply concerned the officers of the line. As Quartermaster-General, my compensation was in my own hands. I was, in fact, a mere spectator.”

The answer from Governor Brooks was delayed until the 6th of September, 1823, in consequence of a protracted illness. Nearly two years after the receipt of it, Colonel Pickering wrote a letter to Armstrong, dated the 15th of July, 1825, in which he says:—

“On the 28th of January, 1820, I received a letter, dated the 20th, at Albany, and signed *John Montgars*, requesting a communication of my recollections concerning the anonymous letters addressed to the officers of the army, at Newburgh, in March, 1783. On the 29th I acknowledged the receipt of the letter, but declined a compliance with the request of a man of whom I had never heard. My letter was addressed to Mr. John Montgars, Albany. This strange name, connected with the subject of the letter, excited my curiosity to know who should call for my answer. I therefore wrote to the postmaster (whom I had never seen, but,

having taken his paper, called 'The Plough Boy,' had corresponded with him on agricultural subjects), requesting him to take notice of the person who should call for it. After sending my answer to the post-office, I again attentively read the letter signed *John Montgars*. The handwriting then appeared to be that of a lady, and wholly different from the signature and the superscription, which struck me as being the handwriting of John Armstrong, the writer of the anonymous letters; and then, transposing the letters of the strangely-sounding name *Montgars*, I found it, adding one *r*, to be *Armstrong*. All these circumstances authorized the conclusion that you had written the letter signed *John Montgars*. This last attentive perusal of the letter also directed my observation to its concluding request, — to address my answer *to the care of Jesse Buel, Esquire*, — which, occupied as was my mind with the subject itself, I had passed over unheeded. So I wrote again to the post-master, desiring him, with his own hand, to deliver my answer to Mr. Buel."

"*Montgars's* story of Mr. Harvie's letter was a perfect novelty, and I was sure had no foundation in fact. What could give rise to such a tale was, indeed, to me utterly incomprehensible. However, although I had no reason to be pleased that you should attempt, by such a course of proceeding, to draw from me any sort of information, yet, leaving *Montgars's* letter on file merely as a subject of amusement, I should never have troubled you with any notice of it, had you not introduced my name and the same story of Harvie's letter into your review of Judge Johnson's 'Sketches of the Life of General Greene.' I call it *your* review, in the full persuasion that you wrote it. In addition to the circumstances before mentioned, I considered the story of Harvie's letter recited in the review, as it had been before stated by *John Montgars*, as fixing the identity of authorship, and that you wrote both.

"... Although confident that, at the meeting of the officers on the 15th, pursuant to the general orders of the 11th

of March, 1783, no opposition to the course recommended by Washington and adopted by the officers was made by me or by any other officer, and although I considered it certain that such a letter as you state Mr. Harvie had written to the General was not read by him, nor commented upon or adverted to by him, yet, to obtain the most perfect satisfaction on both points, from a most unexceptionable witness, I wrote to Governor Brooks, who, you know, at the interesting period referred to, was a colonel in the Massachusetts line, and one of the committee who brought in the resolutions adopted by the officers. At the same time I informed him, that, on the receipt of his answer, I should write to you or to the editor of the Magazine on the subject of those errors. But the severe sickness of the Governor, a protracted convalescence, the necessity of some research, and the cares of his office, prevented his favoring me with an answer until September. This answer confirmed my own recollections; but by that time the affair had grown old, and I felt much apathy concerning it. A few months ago, however, it was reported that you were engaged in writing the History of the United States, — as *John Montgars* had before asserted; and then I again intended to write, to inform you of the two errors above mentioned, — Harvie's letter and my opposition. And now, after so much procrastination, I give you Governor Brooks's information, perfectly corresponding with my own recollections. I told him that I had never doubted, and supposed no officer in the army, at the time, doubted your being the author of the anonymous letters; and that on the cover of my manuscript copies it was noted, in my own handwriting, that the letters were written 'By J. A. Jun.,' * your father being then living.

"Governor Brooks, in his letter to me, [of the 6th of September, 1823], says, 'My impressions respecting the

* This indorsement is not dated, and it may have been made long after the delivery of Washington's address to the officers; so that it does not prove the point for which it is adduced. See Colonel Pickering's letter of March 16th, 1783, to Mr. Hodgdon, p. 437.

writer of the Newburgh anonymous letters were, at the time of their being published, and ever since have been, similar to your own. The story told by the reviewer of General Washington's having publicly read and commented upon a letter from Mr. Harvie, is altogether fictitious. No letter whatever was read by the General when he addressed the officers; nor was any writing, or source of information, touching the subject of the meeting, mentioned by him, excepting the anonymous letters.'

"Governor Brooks then, mentioning the report of the army committee at Philadelphia having been read to the officers and considered, recurs to the subject of the General's address, and says, 'The address was acted upon by itself; and, being put into the hands of a committee, of which General Knox was chairman, the committee reported a number of resolves, which, without opposition or discussion, were accepted.'

"The Governor, after numerous details and observations, further says, 'I have been thus particular in order to show that the assertion of the reviewer, that you were the only person who opposed the measures recommended by General Washington on the 15th of March, and adopted by the army, is destitute of foundation. There was, as you rightly intimate, no opposition from any quarter.' In truth, *personally* I had no interest in the pending question about half pay or commutation,—a question so highly interesting to the officers of the line.* For their sufferings, indeed, I felt very sen-

* Although he was not entitled to half pay or commutation (see page 312), it would seem that he was "personally" interested in having provision made for the payment of the public creditors. In 1825 he wrote to Judge Johnson, "I had no arrears of pay to demand; my compensation was in my own hands;" but here his memory was certainly at fault, for it appears that he did not apply the public money received by him to the payment in full of the sums due either to himself or to his assistants (see page 274); and in a letter to Robert Morris, of the 1st of April, only seventeen days after the meeting of the officers, he said, "I am now indebted, for moneys borrowed of my friends since the 22d of February, 1781, for the support of my family, upwards of nineteen hundred hard dollars." At the same time about four thousand dollars were due to him as a member of the Board of War. See pp. 452, 454.

sibly, and most cordially wished them relief. Affected by such sentiments, I doubtless expressed them in the conversations of the time. The justice of their claims was so palpable, apparently so irresistible, the upright heart of Washington, and perhaps an idea of a successful interposition from the influence of his name and character, then so highly exalted and in almost universal estimation supremely meritorious, produced a confidence that adequate provision for doing complete justice to the army would be made. The expression of this confidence by the General doubtless had a powerful influence on the assembled officers, and induced on their part a reciprocation of that confidence; ‘fully convinced,’ say they, ‘that the representatives of America will not disband or disperse the army until their accounts are liquidated, the balances accurately ascertained, *and adequate funds established for payment*;’ including the half pay or commutation. But the separate, sovereign States withheld the means of providing such funds; the army was disbanded, — and cheated.

“The letter dated February 23d, 1797, and published in the review as from Washington to you, concerning the anonymous letters, occasioned, generally, no small degree of surprise; and some doubts have been entertained of its authenticity.* I have been well informed that no such letter is to be found among Washington’s archives; and the declaration in the letter, that, at the time of writing his Address, he did not regard you as the author of the anonymous letters, is an enigma. His military secretary and aids mingled among the officers of the army, and of these the united voices would have pronounced you to be the author. Now, in considering the anonymous letters in the military cabinet, the first question obviously must have been, ‘Who wrote them?’ and the answer of the military family must have been, ‘The officers, with one voice, ascribe them to Armstrong.’ How, then, could *you* be wholly forgotten,

* Mr. Sparks publishes the letter, without calling in question its genuineness. — *Writings of Washington*, Vol. VIII. p. 566.

and not regarded as the author of those letters? The interrogatory intimation, in the General's address, that the writer, instead of a friend to the army, 'was rather an insidious foe, — some emissary perhaps from New York,' would seem to me to have been suggested to aggravate the offence of the writer, and to produce an increased excitement in the persons addressed, rather than as indicative that such was the General's belief. The general strain of the address shows that he then thought the writer of the anonymous letters highly criminal, and therefore warranting the above-mentioned suggestion."

Governor Brooks, in his letter to Colonel Pickering, considers the authorship of the Newburgh Addresses to be placed beyond question by Armstrong's review of Johnson's "Life of Greene"; but he says: —

"I should not have expected to meet the assertions of the reviewer, that the author of the anonymous letters did not lie concealed a single month; that in the year 1783 he made no secret of his having written them, and that in the year 1803 he republished, acknowledged, and defended them. For, although the facts as stated might have been true, yet the avowal, I am confident, never reached me."

In regard to the supposed letter of 1797, in which Washington is made to say of the Newburgh Addresses, that he had "had sufficient reason for believing that the object of the author was just, honorable, and friendly to the country," Governor Brooks says: —

"It seems most extraordinary and inexplicable that the President should have written *such a letter* to General Armstrong. It had not been solicited, and no circumstances appear which could have called for such a communication. . . . But there are other considerations connected with the President's letter to Mr. Armstrong, as there were other

parties equally with him, under any view of the case, entitled to an explanation, — I mean the public, and more especially the army. For there can be no doubt the tone of public opinion respecting the design and tendency of the Newburgh letters was given and maintained by the address and other documents of General Washington. A similar remark will apply to the army, though with some limitation. What the impressions on the General's own mind were, when, on the 15th of March, 1783, he addressed the officers of the army respecting the character of those letters, is best learned from the measures he took to counteract their influence. But they must have been strong and deep to have warranted, or to have drawn from him, so grave and solemn an appeal to the honor, the patriotism, and the sober judgment of the army, as his was on that occasion."

Governor Brooks controverts the assertion that the design of the writer of the Newburgh Addresses was honorable and friendly to the country, and states the disastrous consequences which probably would have flowed from the measures there recommended ; but he argues that the idea, which he says was entertained by some persons at the time, that a revolt of the army was feasible, and to be effected with the greatest facility, was a delusion.

In answer to Colonel Pickering's letter of the 15th of July, 1825, Armstrong wrote, on the 6th of October, as follows : —

"The anagram which gave you so much trouble, and even some degree of offence, was employed with two views equally innoxious : the one, to secure to the documents I might obtain, an impartiality wholly uninfluenced by the name of the applicant, or by any supposed relation in which he stood to the transaction inquired into ; the other, to avoid being gazetted as a writer of history until I had better

assured myself that my health, and habits, and family avocations would enable me to go through the labor necessarily connected with such an undertaking. As a device for surprising you into the admission of any fact of doubtful occurrence, it would have been equally base and bungling, and quite as inapplicable to your character as unworthy of my own. What I asked was, not an approval of any statement of mine, but your best recollection of a public and interesting fact; and be assured, that had my respect for you been less, either on the score of intelligence or integrity, you would not have been troubled with an application from me in any form or under any name."

Then, after observing that traditionary details ought to be received with great circumspection, and that the narratives of even ear and eye witnesses often differ very materially, and sometimes expressly contradict each other, he says:—

"Between your recollection and mine, in relation to the southern letter and its influence on the proceedings of the 15th of March, 1783, there is a similar discrepancy, and, of course, another proof of the uncertainty of historical evidence. In support of your belief, you quote the respectable authority of the late Governor Brooks, given, at your instance, upwards of forty years after the transaction to which it refers, and, if my inference from your letter be just, when Mr. Brooks was literally on his death-bed; while, on the other hand, I am able to sustain mine by that of another and equally respectable member of the committee, whose statement was spontaneously made, within a month after the meeting, in a sound state of both mind * and body, and in an official letter (transmitting a copy of the resolutions

* Colonel Pickering, in a subsequent letter to Armstrong, repels the inference that Brooks was not in a sound state of mind, saying, "I am sure there was no ground for such a supposition; his mind and memory appeared to me as clear and unclouded as at any period of his life." Brooks lived till March 1st, 1825, nearly eighteen months after the date of his letter.

adopted) to a general officer, commanding a separate and distant department. You will at once perceive that I allude to the late General Hand.*

“Another disagreement, though of minor importance, relates to the part taken by you in the hasty discussion given to the subject at the Public Building. That I did believe you to have been opposed to the course pursued on that occasion, is true; and that this belief resulted from impressions made by your public speech, is also true; but, if even actions be liable to misconstruction, how much more so are words! It is enough that you now disavow the imputation, as I am far from supposing that either my comprehension of your meaning then, or my recollection of your language now, can be more correct than your own. In any future notice, therefore, that I may have occasion to take of the business, I shall be careful to correct the statement made in the review.”

Armstrong next examines the objections made against the genuineness of the letter of 1797, from President Washington. To the objection that the letter is not found in the Washington archives, he replies, that, were there no similar omissions in these records, the circumstance would barely furnish a presumption against its genuineness; whereas it is well known that there are gaps in Washington's letter-books.

The other objection he alleges to be merely argumentative, resting on gratuitous facts, but which, even if granted, he says, will not support the conclusion drawn from them; for, supposing that Washington believed as he said or insinuated that he did, with regard to the character and motives of the author of the anonymous letters, and that he was assured at the same time of his person, it was his obvious duty to

* Then Adjutant-General. He was at the meeting, but was *not* a member of the committee.

bring him to light and to punish him ; but, as he omitted to do either, it followed that he uttered opinions which he did not seriously entertain, or that, not having it in his power to identify the author, he was unable to do more than he did. But Armstrong denies that, on the 15th of March, 1783, the anonymous letters were unanimously ascribed to him by the officers of the army. He says:—

“On the very day of the meeting I heard the letters ascribed to not less than five different persons, among whom the real author was not mentioned. Nor did this difference of opinion cease with the meeting, nor even with the war ; in proof of which I need but recall to your memory the persecution suffered by the late Governor Eustis, in the town of Boston, on the testimony of an officer of the old army, and on the ground that he (Eustis) was the writer of these very letters, —a charge so seriously made, so generally believed, and so pertinaciously urged by a large and respectable party in the district, that, to escape its effects, the sufferer was driven to the expedient of an expurgatory oath.”

It is difficult to reconcile these assertions with the statement in the review, that the author of the anonymous letters did not lie concealed a month, and that in 1783 he made no secret of his having written them. In 1800, when Dr. Eustis was the Democratic candidate for election as a member of Congress for the district of Suffolk, in Massachusetts, a statement by Dr. Eustis, under his name, was published in the Boston newspapers, in which he says he has been “announced the author” ; and he “declares *most solemnly*,” but *not* “*under oath*,” that the charge is false. He was also accused of being at least an abettor in the production and distribution of the letters. To this imputation he did *not* reply.*

* See, in the “Columbian Centinel” of the 29th of October, 1800, Dr. Eustis’s declaration, and the pieces signed “A Citizen,” and “An Elector ;”

If the letter attributed to Washington was genuine, the election in Suffolk afforded a fair opportunity to Armstrong to come to the rescue of Eustis, his old fellow-soldier and friend, and then a member of the same political party, by publishing that letter; which, being addressed to Armstrong, would have shown that in 1797 Washington understood him to be the writer of the Addresses, and so would have relieved Dr. Eustis from an imputation he was anxious to repel; while, at the same time, the tone of the letter would have lessened the odium resting on Armstrong himself.

After Armstrong had, in his review, in 1823, acknowledged himself to be the author of the letters, Dr. Eustis admitted to Dr. Thacher that he was "in the secret," and communicated information respecting them; which previously he had declined doing.* From this it would seem that Dr. Eustis had not been aware of Armstrong's avowal in 1803,—a singular circumstance, if the avowal was explicit. That it was so, is the purport of Armstrong's statement, that in 1803 he republished, acknowledged, and defended the letters.

Armstrong says further:—

"Having thus briefly examined the two objections as stated by you, it may not be amiss to subjoin a short sketch of my own impression with regard to their rise and progress. Though the General's letter was written early in 1797, and was read by several persons entirely capable of deciding whether it was or was not genuine, neither surprise nor doubt was excited by it. It was seen and regarded as an act of justice to me, and even to himself, who had some years before actually appointed me to an office of high trust and confidence, without a shadow of application on my part.

and, in the paper of the 1st of November, a piece signed "Faneuil Hall," and certificates of William Hull and Benjamin Russell.

* See the letter of Dr. Thacher, on page 436.

In this unimpeached condition it remained till 1803, when (having been forced into a political controversy of warm and personal character) I was charged, on the evidence of the anonymous letters, ‘with enmity to Washington, and a design to excite the army to insurrection.’ In repelling these absurd charges, I was naturally led to mention the General’s letter of the 23d of February, 1797; and, if I do not mistake, to quote a portion of it; which produced a demand, on the part of my antagonist, for the letter *in extenso*. This call was promptly complied with; but, the printer having committed an error in the date, the letter itself was now required; and not unreasonably, since a submission of it to public inspection was, no doubt, the shortest and surest method of determining whether the error was really one of the types, or the excuse a mere fiction of the printer. This second call was accordingly neither refused nor evaded. The letter was instantly placed in the office of the ‘Plebeian,’ with instructions that it should be shown to any person of any party who had a desire to see it. When I say that my principal antagonist was the late Barent Gardenier, I need hardly add that the document underwent a very thorough examination; the result of which was a discontinuance of all further attacks on its genuineness.

“Such is the real history of the first appearance of the doubts and surmises which have existed on this subject; but, though publicly refuted by the production of the letter itself, what can be easier than to give them a resurrection? Ignorance of the facts I have just stated, or a forgetfulness of them, or a desire to renew the controversy, may at once produce this effect; and my labors must be renewed, or I must submit quietly, or at least silently, to the old and exploded imputation. In discussing some of Judge Johnson’s dreams, a year or two ago, it became necessary for me to mention this letter; and, anticipating a question concerning its genuineness, I suggested a mode by which the Judge might become personally, or by proxy, a party to the inves-

tigation ; but, perhaps, not choosing to be convinced against his will, he declined the invitation ; and there rests the business between him and me. Fortunately men more competent than himself, as well with regard to the knowledge as the impartiality necessary to the inquiry, have not declined the task ; and I accordingly subjoin a copy of a certificate of one who will not be suspected of being a dupe, and still less of combining with another in giving credit and currency to an imposture, which, from his intimate acquaintance with General Washington's handwriting, it would be so easy for him to detect. I mean the late guest of the nation, General de Lafayette. It is in the following words : ' I, the undersigned, do certify, that the foregoing letter is a true and literal copy of one signed by the late General Washington, in his proper handwriting, and addressed within to John Armstrong, Esq., and without to General John Armstrong, Rinebec, Manor of Livingston, — franked and dated Philadelphia, Feb. 23d, 1797. LAFAYETTE.' ”

To some minds the question may present itself, — If Armstrong was conscious of the genuineness of the letter, and satisfied that he had produced convincing proof of it, why should he anticipate the probability that it would be again called in question ? With respect to Lafayette's certificate, it may be observed, that the circumstances under which it was made, and the object of it, are not set forth ; that it does not appear that his attention was called to the suspicion resting on the genuineness of the letter ; and that, if the object was to prove it genuine, no reason is given why he did not certify on the letter itself, rather than on a *copy* of it, that it was in the handwriting of Washington.

Armstrong says the exculpation “ was regarded as an act of justice to me.” But why should Washington

do any act in the premises? He had not named Armstrong in his address to the officers; nor, according to Armstrong, did he then suspect him to be the writer of the anonymous letters; neither is it probable, that, even in 1797, this fact was with Washington anything more than a suspicion founded on mere rumor; for, by Armstrong's own statement, the authorship was a subject of controversy so late as 1800, when Dr. Eustis was a candidate for office.* Moreover, Dr. Eustis, his confidential friend, did not consider the injunction of secrecy removed from his lips until the appearance of the review, in 1823, of Johnson's *Life of General Greene*.†

On the other hand, the allegation that the letter of 1797 was actually written by Washington, derives support from the subsequent statement of Colonel Pickering in relation to acts done by Washington just before he retired from the Presidency, as well as from the letter of General Cobb, quoted in the next chapter.‡

In writing to Judge Johnson, March 9th, 1825, Colonel Pickering refers to the letter from President Washington of the 23d of February, 1797, "eight days prior to the termination of his presidency," and states certain facts as countenancing the idea that the letter might be genuine. He says:—

"Just at the close of his administration, Washington appears to have thought it expedient to state some things in which his opinion and testimony might be useful, perhaps necessary, for the public good and the establishment of truth. Hence his letter to Mr. Adams, his elected successor, dated February 20th, 1797, . . . recommending to

* See page 424.

† See Dr. Thacher's letter, on page 436.

‡ See page 431.

him 'not to withhold merited promotion from Mr. John Quincy Adams, because he was his son.' . . . Three days after his letter to Adams, that to Armstrong bears date. And on the 3d of March, the last day of his presidency, he wrote his letter * to me, as Secretary of State, in which he specified seven letters, to Lund Washington and others, which, in 1777, were published by the British or their Tory adherents in New York, as General Washington's; and, after a minute detail of facts to falsify the enemy's statement concerning them, he says, 'I have thought it a duty that I owed to myself, to my country and to truth, now to detail the circumstances above recited; and to add my solemn declaration, that the letters herein described are a base forgery.' "

* In Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. XI. p. 192.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Remarks of David Cobb, Nicholas Fish, Ebenezer Huntington, James Thacher, and Colonel Pickering, on the Newburgh Addresses. — Anecdote of Washington. — Supposed Plot to establish a Monarchy. — Further Discussion of the Genuineness of the Letter purporting to be written by Washington to Armstrong. — Armstrong's Talents. — Supposed Letter from Colonel Harvie. — Contemporary Letters of Colonel Pickering. — Proceedings on the Addresses at a Meeting of the Officers. — Recollections of Armstrong and others.

AFTER receiving the last-mentioned letter from Armstrong, Colonel Pickering wrote to General David Cobb, Colonel Nicholas Fish, General Ebenezer Huntington, General William Hull, and Dr. James Thacher, officers in the American army of the Revolution, giving his own and requesting their recollections respecting the Newburgh Addresses.

In his letter to General Cobb, after mentioning Armstrong's assertion, that Washington read to the officers a letter from Colonel Harvie, in which it was stated that a plan was matured at the seat of government to overturn republicanism and set up a monarchy, and to put down the Commander-in-Chief, and that Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton were the authors of the plan, he says : —

“ Never was I more astonished than on reading the above account of such a letter from Colonel Harvie. When the General delivered his address to the officers, I stood within ten feet of him; and if *such a letter* had been *read*, and *commented upon*, by him, I deem it absolutely impossible

that I should not have noticed and remembered it, implicating, as it did, so criminally, such eminent men as Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton. . . . I recollect that the General, having begun to read his address without his spectacles, presently paused ; and, while pulling them out of his pocket, he said, ‘ I have grown gray in the service, and am now growing blind.’ ”

General Cobb, who was an aid of General Washington, wrote, in reply, from Taunton, November 9th, 1825 : —

“ I was not present at the meeting of the officers in the Temple at Newburgh in March, 1783 ; but, within a fortnight after, I joined the family at head-quarters, where the circumstances of that meeting and the anonymous letters were the subjects of our frequent conversations. From this source of information, I am confident you are correct in saying that neither Harvie’s letter nor any other writing or observation was communicated by the Commander-in-Chief at the time he delivered his address, excepting a few words, the purport of which you have recited. You will permit me to repeat them as I had them from Secretary Trumbull. When the General took his station in the desk or pulpit, which, you may recollect, was in the Temple, he took out his written address from his coat pocket, and his spectacles, with his other hand, from his waistcoat pocket, and then addressed the officers in the following manner : ‘ Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind, in the service of my country.’ This little address, with the mode and manner of delivering it, drew tears from [many]* of the officers. As you were present, you may perhaps recollect this circumstance.

“ Prior to the appearance of the first anonymous letter, reports were in circulation, that the leading men of the government at Philadelphia had made arrangements for

* Some such word as *many* or *most* seems to have been accidentally omitted.

forming a monarchical government in the United States, instead of a republic. Washington was to have the offer of the throne; but, finding that he abhorred their system, and would not accept their offer, they proceeded by anonymous letters and agents to corrupt the army, in hopes of compelling him into a compliance.* General Gates and his aid, Armstrong, were in the plot; the anonymous letters came out of Gates's family, and were privately communicated by Armstrong to the officers in the huts. This circumstance, no doubt, gave rise to the report, or opinion, that he was the author of them; but this was never the opinion of head-quarters. The first letter, in particular, was ever considered as coming from a pen far above Armstrong's *mark*, and perhaps from one second only to Junius; the other letter was of a minor character. It is true, as Armstrong observes, that others, besides himself, were charged with being the author of the letters. Eustis, our late Governor, was one; others I do not recollect.

"I never heard of Harvie's letter before: if the Commander-in-Chief ever received such a letter, it was unknown in his family, or, at least, unknown to me; but that he was acquainted particularly with the machinations at Philadelphia I have no doubt.† Whether the characters implicated in Harvie's letter were concerned in the plot, is a matter of no importance in my mind; for much greater characters

* General Cobb and Armstrong agree in the statement, that, about the time of the Newburgh Addresses, there were machinations at Philadelphia for establishing a monarchy; but they differ in one important point, — Cobb asserting that Washington was to be compelled to accept the throne; Armstrong, that he was to be supplanted. Possibly both, in their indistinct recollection, had reference to an occurrence ten months before, when a proposal to make Washington king in fact, though not in name, was rejected by him in a tone "to preclude most effectually any further advances." — Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, Vol. VIII. pp. 300, 301 (note), 393.

† See letter from Washington to Hamilton, of the 16th of April, 1783, in Sparks's "*Writings of Washington*," Vol. VIII. p. 419; — Sparks's "*Life of Gouverneur Morris*," Vol. I. p. 251; — letter from Hamilton to Washington, of the 11th of April, 1783, in Sparks's "*Correspondence of the American Revolution*," Vol. IV. p. 17.

than they were at the head of it. I have ever considered that the United States are indebted for their republican form of government solely to the firm and determined republicanism of General Washington at that time.

"The President's letter to Armstrong, in 1797, I believe to be genuine, from two sentiments therein expressed, — the one, 'that at the time of writing his address, he did not regard him as the author of the anonymous letters;' the other, 'that the author had honorable and friendly views to his country, although mistaken ones,' &c. These I believe, indeed I may say I know them, to be the opinions of the President.

"You observe that Judge Johnson, in his 'Life of General Greene,' ascribes the Newburgh anonymous letters (letter, I should say) to Gouverneur Morris. In this he meets my opinion, and, I believe, the unanimous opinion of headquarters. I should, therefore, say, that Armstrong's avowing himself the author of those letters (of the second he may have been, with assistance) is to be set down to the score of vanity altogether.*

"I have thus freely communicated to you, for your private satisfaction and amusement, some of the opinions and transactions of head-quarters at the most eventful period in the life of Washington, and I have to request that they go no further; for, if I am called upon to verify my assertions, I can make no defence. My witnesses are all dead, and I can only appeal to the Court of Heaven."

The propriety of publishing General Cobb's letter, in disregard of his request, may possibly be questioned; but his testimony seemed to be too important to be omitted in a history of the Newburgh Addresses. The letter exposes him to no imputation other than that of misrecollection in regard to an early occurrence, and of erroneous opinions. In these respects he stands

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 419. But Armstrong's claim is sustained by Dr. Eustis, as hereafter stated on page 436.

on equal ground with Colonel Pickering and other contemporaries here quoted, and needs "make no defence."

If, as he alleges, it was never the opinion at headquarters that Armstrong was the writer of the anonymous letters, and if Cobb himself continued incredulous in 1825, the simple fact, that the person, whoever he might be, to whom, in 1783, Washington attributed the "blackest designs," was afterwards thought by him to have acted from good motives, does not furnish very strong ground for writing to Armstrong the letter of 1797 on the mere surmise that he was the person in question.

Without denying the genuineness of the letter of 1797, it seems to me, that, on a view of all the circumstances, we may at least return the Scotch verdict in doubtful cases — "Not proven."

On the foregoing letter from General Cobb, Colonel Pickering has made this indorsement: —

"I never heard of the monarchical plot herein mentioned; nor do I know of the greater men in Philadelphia (where Congress then sat) than Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton, whom Harvie, in the supposed letter, is made to name as the plotters. The idea of a design of those three, or of any members of Congress, to set up a monarchy, is too ridiculous to have been contemplated, at that time, by any man of sense; and I am astonished that Cobb should believe (as his letter imports) in its reality.* And he most erroneously underrates Armstrong's *talents*, which are certainly of a high order. The second letter is just such as the occasion called for, and did not admit of the glowing sentiments exhibited in the first."

* Nevertheless the establishment of a monarchy was proposed to Washington in May, 1782, as before mentioned. See page 432, note.

Colonel Nicholas Fish, also an aid of Washington, was absent in West Chester County at the time when Washington addressed the officers; but he says, in a letter of November 30th, 1825:—

“On my return a few days thereafter, I heard all that had taken place, even the circumstance of the General’s spectacles, as stated in your letter, and the effect produced by it, but never heard a word of Mr. Harvie’s conspiracy letter.”

He is confident that if such a letter, implicating Robert and Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton, had been read, he should not have forgotten it; and of the like opinion were Colonel Aaron Ogden, of New Jersey, and the officers of the New York Society of Cincinnati, with whom Colonel Fish had conversed.

General Ebenezer Huntington, in a letter to Colonel Pickering, dated at Norwich, December 28th, 1825, says:—

“At the time those celebrated Newburgh letters made their appearance in camp at West Point, I was absent therefrom on a visit to Connecticut, and did not return until the meeting of the officers had been held for their consideration. . . . The subject-matter under consideration at that meeting of the officers was, on my return, minutely detailed to me by the officers who attended; . . . but I have not the smallest impression on my mind, that I ever heard of any plot to overturn the republican institutions of our country, at that period to which you allude, say 1783, excepting so far as we may apply that term to the anonymous letters.”

Dr. James Thacher wrote from Plymouth the 5th of January, 1826, and, after mentioning that Captain

James Sever, of Kingston, near Plymouth, was at the meeting of the officers, he says : —

“He [Sever] is positive that no such letter as Armstrong mentions was ever produced on that occasion. He believes, with me, and with all others that I have conversed with, that it is a vile fabrication, and a most gross absurdity. The characters named as the conspirators were, it is well known, among the warmest friends of Washington. It is very strange that no one has ever exposed Armstrong’s falsehood to the public view. When I was about to publish my Journal,* I had some conversation with Dr. Eustis on the subject of the anonymous letters, wishing to draw something from him that I might publish; but he would give me no information. After Armstrong’s publication in the ‘Magazine’ I again introduced the subject to Dr. Eustis, and he freely acknowledged that he was in the secret; and added, that Armstrong had written, besides the anonymous letters, something which was, as he termed it, much worse, but, finding himself already in trouble, he deemed it most prudent to suppress it. I am of opinion, that, had Armstrong met with much encouragement, he would have been the means of effecting nearly the destruction of the army and our country.”

In his letter to General Hull (to which no answer is found), Colonel Pickering wrote : —

“An attempt to use the force of the remnant of the army in rebellion against the government of our country, would have been *absurd*, because success was too impracticable to be hoped for. Besides, the army could not have been brought into the measure; while the alarm to be excited by the intimation *not to disband* until funds were provided for the ultimate payment of the arrears due to the army,

* It was published in 1823, under the title of “Military Journal during the American Revolutionary War.”

might have induced the delinquent States (Rhode Island, and I believe Maryland, which refused to grant imposts and other taxes) to concur with the other eleven States in making such just and adequate provision. The establishment of such funds would have raised the final-settlement notes to par, or near it."

Paley, in his "*Horæ Paulinæ*," observes, in reference to the authentication of historical facts, "The great object of modern research is to come at the epistolary correspondence of the times. Amidst the obscurities, the silence, or the contradictions of history, if a letter can be found, we regard it as the discovery of a landmark; as that by which we can correct, adjust, or supply the imperfections and uncertainties of other accounts."* This remark is strikingly applicable, in the case of the Newburgh Addresses, to the following important letters from Colonel Pickering to Mr. Hodgdon, his Assistant Quartermaster-General, at Philadelphia, and to Mrs. Pickering.

"NEWBURGH, March 16th, 1783.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"By this conveyance Congress will be furnished with copies of the proceedings of the officers of the army at their meeting yesterday, of which I gave you an intimation in my last. That you may not be kept in suspense about the origin and ground of this transaction, and for the gratification of yourself and friends, I enclose you copies of the anonymous papers which gave the alarm, and of the general orders consequent thereon. I wish I could send you also a copy of the proceedings yesterday; but I have them not. But I can recite them substantially.

"The Commander-in-Chief attended, and addressed the assembly (composed of the general and field officers, and

* "*Paley's Works*," Boston edit. of 1812, Vol. V. p. 238.

an officer from each company, and the principal staff) in a handsome speech, which he read, having (as he said) committed his thoughts to writing, that he might express them with more perspicuity and connection. It was, in substance, declaratory of the merits of the army, of the reputation they had gained, and which was spread through all Europe, — of his affection for his fellow-soldiers, — his anxiety lest they should, by a precipitate action, excited by such inflammatory pieces as the anonymous Addresses, tarnish their well-earned glory, — his readiness to render them every aid in his power to relieve their sufferings and procure them justice, — of his confidence in the good dispositions of Congress towards them, — and that rash measures now might defeat the very ends they had in view. He also expressed his abhorrence of the insidious designs of the writer of the anonymous Addresses, and even intimated that he might be an emissary (or in league with one) from New York.

“After this the General [Washington] read a private letter of the 27th of February (I imagine from Mr. Jones, of Virginia) from a member of Congress, written without the most distant expectation of its being used on such an occasion; but, containing sentiments and information pertinent to the occasion, he thought himself justified in the communication of it. This letter was written with calmness and great good sense; mentioning the measures Congress were pursuing to obtain permanent revenues, and his hopes of their succeeding, the reasons which prevented prompt decisions, and his wishes that the army might a little longer persevere in that line of patient endurance which had hitherto done them so much honor.

“The General having then withdrawn, and General Gates assumed the chair, General Knox moved a vote of thanks to the Commander-in-Chief for ‘his excellent speech.’ It was carried *nem. con.*

“A committee was chosen to draught such resolutions as might be proper for the assembly to adopt, — General Knox,

Colonel Brooks, and a Captain Howard were the members of it, — to report in half an hour. They reported three resolutions, which, as well as I can recollect, were to this effect: —

“The 1st. Expressive of the patriotic motives which first induced them to take up arms; and a determination not to sully, by any unworthy conduct, the honor they had gained with the price of their blood.

“2. To desire Congress not to disband or disperse the army until their accounts were liquidated, the balances due ascertained, and funds for payment established, — half pay or a commutation efficaciously included.

“3. To request the Commander-in-Chief to present a copy of these resolutions to Congress, enforced by his own representations.

“After these three resolutions had been debated (if a conversation between three persons, in so numerous an assembly, deserves the name of a debate; for there were no more speakers, unless of a word or two, or short motion), altered, amended, and agreed to, a fourth was added, of thanks to their committee at Philadelphia for the wisdom and prudence with which they had conducted their business, and a desire that General McDougall would continue at Philadelphia until the objects of his mission were accomplished. Then a fifth resolution was moved, which, though it corresponded with the ideas of the ————,* and doubtless was therefore produced, yet it is my private opinion that the army will be ashamed of it. They had sufficiently expressed, in the close of the third resolve, their disapprobation of insidious attempts and evil machinations of designing men.† I would have opposed it; but, having

* *Commander-in-Chief* must be intended. See Sparks's “Writings of Washington,” Vol. VIII. p. 397.

† In the third resolve it is declared that a speedy decision of Congress on the memorial presented by the army “would produce immediate tranquillity in the minds of the army, and prevent any further machinations of designing men to sow discord between the civil and military powers of the United States.” The resolution above called “the “fifth” (in the “Writings of Washington”

been obliged, on the former resolutions, to speak so often (amidst the general speechlessness of the assembly), I did not choose to rise again. Besides, from the evident current of the meeting, I found that nobody would venture to second me. But I could not belie my own feelings, and therefore would not sanctify the vote in question by holding up my hand. I do not know whether there was another exception. This fifth resolution was to this effect, — That the army viewed with abhorrence and indignation the insidious attempts of the writer of the two anonymous and ‘*infamous*’ Addresses to the army, which were subversive of all order and discipline. — And thus, my friend, that body of officers, in a moment, damned with infamy two publications, which, during the four preceding days, most of them had read with admiration, and talked of with rapture! *Mobile vulgus!* Some *confidential* friend will explain the two last words.

“Who was the author of the pieces I know not. Being unable to hit on any man in the army as equal to so truly *Junian* a composition, I supposed the first piece had been brought from Philadelphia; but, the second making its appearance the very evening after the publication of the general order of the 11th, it was clear the writer was at hand. If his design was insidious; if he meant to draw the army to revolt and sedition; if selfish or ambitious motives pointed his pen, — let him be damned! But examine calmly. Will not his pieces admit of a more favorable construction? What should we expect from an enlightened spirit, from an officer of keen sensibility, who had sustained the toils and dangers of seven campaigns? who (to use his own words), during that long period, ‘had felt

the fourth in order), was, “That the officers of the American army view with abhorrence, and reject with disdain, the infamous propositions contained in a late anonymous Address to the officers of the army, and resent with indignation the secret attempts of some unknown persons to collect the officers together in a manner totally subversive of all discipline and good order.”

The Newburgh Addresses and the proceedings upon them are printed in full in “Sparks’s Writings of Washington,” Vol. VIII. pp. 551-566.

the cold hand of poverty without a murmur, and seen the insolence of wealth without a sigh,'—wealth growing from the soil which he and his fellow-soldiers had enriched with their blood? who, when he saw sweet Peace; with her attendant blessings, dawning on the land which his sword had contributed to save, could for himself look forward but to indigence and wretchedness? who, when Gratitude should have spread her joyful arms to embrace him, saw even Justice barring the door against him? What, I repeat, from such a character might be expected? Still longer patience and tame submission? or those warm effusions of the heart, which, with great and animating truths, mingle some drops of extravagance and error? Had the army (the most deserving of all public creditors) no cause to be alarmed, when they had seen the obstinacy of a single petty State * defeat the wise and salutary measure of the impost? Had they no cause to be alarmed, when that great and upright man, the superintendent of the finances of their country, had declared that circumstances had postponed the establishment of public credit in such manner that he feared it would *never* be accomplished; that he must quit his office, because his continuance would compel him to be the minister of injustice? Was it manly, then, implicitly to believe the suspicions against that writer? Was it wise to adopt a resolution that would brand with infamy the man, the brother officer, whose watchful eye and able pen might discover and save them from the evils which ingratitude and injustice might bring, or suffer to fall, upon them?

“But I will tire you no longer with my remarks. You will make your own comments, and I shall be glad to see them.

“I wish you, when you have leisure, to read to Mrs. Pickering this letter and the papers which are the subject of it; I cannot repeat them to her. Save also this letter, for I have no copy. You will consider beforehand to whom you may show it without danger. Demler † carries it, with the despatches from head-quarters. He can bring back

* Rhode Island.

† An assistant quartermaster.

what money and notes you can procure, as mentioned in my public letter of this date.

I am, my dear friend, very sincerely yours,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.”

To Mrs. Pickering he wrote on the same day (the 16th of March):—

“The meeting of the officers mentioned in my last (which I sent open to Mr. Hodgdon) was held yesterday: an account of the result I now send to Mr. Hodgdon. 'Tis too long to repeat, and I have told him to show it to you. If he forgets, ask him for the papers. The result of this meeting has given me another instance of the fickleness of popular assemblies, and shown how easily a fluent orator, with plausibility only to support him, may govern them as he will. The great object I had in view at the meeting is effected, — I mean, the informing of Congress, that it was the wish of the army not to be disbanded until their accounts were settled, and *funds established to pay them*. In this measure I extended my views beyond the army. I cast my eye on the numerous public creditors, who at present have but a *hope* that they will ever be paid. I considered the reputation of my country as at stake in this great question of establishing funds to pay the public debts. I did not desire the army to disband until this essential, all-important point were gained. The wish of the army to this effect being communicated, I knew that Congress and the governments of the States would make some useful and necessary reflections on it.* But by the last resolution of the meeting, I think the army will suffer in its reputation, and consequently in its present views. Some others think differently. The reason of *my* opinion you will see in the letter to the Major [Hodgdon]. Let him see this, as it contains some sentiments which I forgot to express to him.”

* See the letters of Hamilton to Washington of February 7th, 1783, in Sparks's "Correspondence of the American Revolution," Vol. III. p. 550, and March 17th, 1783, in Vol. IV. p. 6.

He wrote again to Mrs. Pickering on the 18th of March, as follows:—

“In my letter of last Sunday I mentioned the meeting^s we had last Saturday. . . . As I foresaw, so I find, that the officers generally disapprove the resolution in which the anonymous publications are called *infamous*, although none of them would venture to object at the meeting. They have conducted like the greater part of mankind, who suffer themselves to be overawed by those who, for their wealth or offices, are called *great men*. I should not have contented myself with giving that vote my silent negative, if the former part of the proceedings had not shown me that I should stand alone the butt of resentment to the C. in C. [Commander-in-Chief] and some officers who implicitly adopted his opinion.

“I am in some doubt about a *general* peace, but I have very little that the British will leave New York before the first of June. This will relieve the United States in some degree, and I am not certain that it will not be more useful than universal peace. The union of the States is shaken by our own divisions; and no funds are established to pay the public debts. For these reasons absolute peace might at this time be detrimental.

“I feel some solicitude for our future support; yet, as neither of us have so much pride as to put us above any honest calling, I trust in Providence that we shall not want. Farewell, my love! In every possible situation I shall strive to make you happy.”

From these letters it appears that, when Washington read his address to the officers, Armstrong was most probably not regarded by him, and certainly not by Colonel Pickering, as the author of the anonymous letters; and that on this point Armstrong was more accurate in his recollection than Colonel Pickering or Governor Brooks. He was also right in asserting that

a letter from a Virginia member of Congress, or an extract from it, was read by Washington; but he erred in assigning it to Hardy or Harvie, and in alleging that it implicated Robert Morris, Gouverneur Morris, and Alexander Hamilton in the supposed conspiracy against Washington. General Hand, to whom Armstrong refers as an authority, was at the meeting of the officers, and may have written that a letter was read to them by the Commander-in-Chief; but it is impossible that he should within a month have described it as implicating those gentlemen. Brooks and Cobb were mistaken in saying that no letter whatever was communicated to the officers by Washington, and that his address was acted upon by itself; while, in denying that *such* a letter was produced as Armstrong describes, implicating the Morris and Hamilton, Colonel Pickering and the gentlemen whom he consulted are sustained by unquestionable evidence. In a manuscript pamphlet, noted on the cover, by Colonel Pickering, "Anonymous Addresses . . . by J. A., Jr.," are copies, made at the time by one of his clerks, of the anonymous letters, of Washington's address, of the resolutions of the officers, and of a "letter from a member of Congress to General Washington;" which last, there is no reason to doubt, is a copy of the paper communicated to the officers at the meeting. A recurrence to Sparks's "Correspondence of the American Revolution" (Vol. III. p. 554), where the whole letter is published, shows that this manuscript presents only portions of it.* It agrees with

* These portions leave out, as irrelevant, remarks on Vermont, but contain the rest of the letter with the significant omission of these sentences: "Whether to temporize, or oppose with steady, unremitting firmness what is supposed to be in agitation, of dangerous tendency, or that may be agitated, must be left to your own sense of propriety and better judgment;" "That we shall have peace soon is almost reduced to a certainty; but my fears are,

the abstract in Colonel Pickering's letter to Hodgdon, where it is correctly attributed to Joseph Jones. On a perusal of the letter as published by Sparks, the reader will perceive that it makes no allusion to either of the Morrisises or to Hamilton.

Armstrong's allegation, that Colonel Pickering opposed the course desired by Washington, though questioned by Colonel Pickering and positively denied by Governor Brooks, is perhaps not void of foundation. Brooks says, "The committee reported a number of resolves, which, without opposition or discussion, were accepted." Here his recollection is clearly inaccurate; for Colonel Pickering, in his letter written to Hodgdon the next day, says they were "*debated* (if a conversation between three persons, in so numerous an assembly, deserves the name of a debate . . .), *altered*, and *amended*." The resolves, as reported by Knox, probably had the previous approbation of Washington;* and, from the tone of the letter to Hodgdon it may be inferred that in their original form they were not satisfactory to Colonel Pickering, and that he had spoken on them "so often," and in opposition to parts of them, in order to obtain the amendments which were adopted. As he says, in his letter of March 16th to Mrs. Pickering, that the great object he had in view at the meeting

it will not be attended with those blessings generally expected. There are so many great questions, very interesting to particular States, unsettled, that it is difficult to avoid uneasy impressions for the consequences." The first passage might have affected unpleasantly the minds of the officers; the last was discouraging, and would have fostered their discontent. It would also seem to have been thought politic to keep out of sight the expectation of a speedy peace. Hamilton wrote to Washington on the 7th of February, "It appears to be a prevailing opinion in the army, that the disposition to recompense their services will cease with the necessity for them." — Sparks's *Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Vol. III. p. 550; Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, Vol. VIII. p. 395.

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 397.

was effected, — the informing of Congress that it was the wish of the army not to be disbanded until their accounts were settled, and *funds established to pay them*, — I infer that the resolutions, as *amended*, received his vote in their favor. As to the additional resolution, calling the anonymous Addresses *infamous*, he says expressly that it was displeasing to him, and that he would not vote for it, but that he did not express his objections at the meeting.

The letter to Hodgdon affords an answer to Armstrong's earnest question, how it has happened that a document so important as the "extraordinary letter" from Harvie "should not have been mentioned by any chronicler of the times or biographer of Washington," and puts an end to his benevolent theory, that Washington must have destroyed it in order to prevent its being made the instrument of any new or additional injury. It is plain that it never had any existence, except in the very erroneous representation by Armstrong of the letter from Joseph Jones.

In answer to Colonel Pickering's letter, Mr. Hodgdon wrote from Philadelphia the 26th of March :—

"I am exceedingly indebted to you for your very kind communications. They afforded myself and confidential friends a rich repast. At some leisure hour I will give you my sentiments on the proceedings, a part of which I think very extraordinary. The Addresses are read here with admiration, and the author universally celebrated. The ——'s * letter to Congress on the occasion is said to be a great performance, superior to anything of the kind that has yet made its appearance."

* Doubtless *Commander-in-Chief's*. See the letter to Congress in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 396.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Colonel Pickering's Attention to Public Economy. — His Purpose to enter into Mercantile Business. — His Repugnance to dwelling in a Slave-holding State. — The Announcement of Peace. — His Correspondence with Robert Morris on the Accounts of the Quartermaster's Department. — His Public Spirit. — His Plan for the Settlement of a new State in the Western Territory by Officers and Soldiers of the American Army. — His Report on a Military Peace Establishment. — His Plan for a Military Academy at West Point.

In anticipation of peace, Colonel Pickering manifested his disposition to promote public economy, by reducing the staff, and consequently the expenses of his department. In a letter, dated at Newburgh, the 25th of March, 1783, to his wife, he expressed regret that it was not in his power to relieve her from the troublesome business of a removal from the Falls of Schuylkill to Philadelphia, and that he could not make her a visit on "the auspicious eighth of April" (their wedding-day), his duties requiring his presence in the State of New York. He said further:—

"I have no deputy. Major Cogswell * is yet absent, and I shall not call on Colonel Lutterloh for assistance, as I mean now to desire him to close immediately all the business of his department, and to put the purchases of forage on another footing, without employing a commissary of forage. So the whole weight of the department will lie immediately upon me, and undoubtedly require my continuance in this State until May, and perhaps longer; but, by the first of June, I have strong expectations that I shall write you from

* Wagon-master-General.

the *city of New York*. That event will enable me to snatch a few days to be devoted to you. . . .

"I have received from brother Williams a letter, acknowledging the receipt of mine on the subject of my settling at Philadelphia. I see that he approves the plan. . . . I observe he takes hold on the idea I started, . . . that the trade which would now be most profitable to Massachusetts would lie with Maryland and Virginia, where *tobacco*, as well as *flour*, may be obtained. And what should you think of going farther southward? To Baltimore, for instance? To Alexandria, or Norfolk, in Virginia? I confess my own repugnance to dwelling in a country where such multitudes of the human species are degraded to the condition of the brute creation. They begin, however, to emerge from this barbarous custom. . . .

"This moment I am interrupted by a rap at the door. All in bed but myself, who wake for you. I let the messenger in; he presents me a paper with these words: 'A general peace is concluded'! My heart's darling joy, you have already exulted in this happy news; and soon, by God's will, shall I be restored to your tender embraces. Then we will again rejoice; then will we pour out the grateful effusions of our souls to that great and merciful Being who has carried us in safety through a calamitous war, and given us the object of our wishes. O for a country deserving of such blessings! But God is gracious even to the unthankful and unjust. His mercy endureth for ever. Exalted be his name. In him we will repose our confidence, and in his loving-kindness, to preserve our lives and the lives of our sweet babes, and to give us a competency with contentment. Contentment will make a poor man rich."*

* The letter was to have been handed to Mrs. Pickering by Colonel Gouvion, of the French army, and she was requested to "show him every civility, as a most worthy man, justly beloved by all who know and will acknowledge his merits." But, on account of the news of peace, he postponed his journey to Philadelphia, writing to Colonel Pickering, "I must stay in camp to take my share of the joy which will be felt by all my fellow-officers, in a moment when they see their hardships, labors, and perseverance crowned with the glorious success which was the only object we aimed at."

He wrote the next day, the 26th of March, to his brother:—

“The joyful news of peace will reach you ere this arrives. Nevertheless I will mention the substance of the intelligence which arrived last night at head-quarters.

“The Marquis de Lafayette had arrived at Cadiz, to proceed with the Comte D’Estaing on the grand expedition against Jamaica; but, the treaty of peace having been signed, the Comte and the Marquis despatched a sloop of war with the intelligence, which was fortunate enough to be the first. The despatches were delivered to the General by a youth whom the Marquis took with him from America, and sent hither for the purpose. One paper calls the treaty, which was signed the 21st of January by the belligerent powers, ‘*the preliminaries to a general peace.*’ But a letter from the President of Congress to Governor Livingston calls it a ‘*definitive treaty.*’ . . .

“The General’s letters were from the Minister of France and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in which they congratulate him on *the close of the war*. A messenger yesterday arrived here from New York with information that the British were calling in all their cruisers. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs, by permission of Congress, sent his under-secretary to Sir Guy Carleton with the intelligence received from Cadiz: so all doubt of the great event is precluded.”

A passage in a letter from Mr. Hodgdon, of the 26th of March, was the occasion of a remarkable correspondence between Colonel Pickering and Robert Morris. Mr. Hodgdon wrote:—

“I cannot at present obtain further supplies for paying off Colonel Neilson’s department. Mr. Morris insists upon a settlement of your accounts previous to any more advances. I have told him you were doing all in your power to compass this very desirable business, and that an advance of money

for the purpose requested would facilitate it. I hope yet to prevail, but wish you would write him on the subject, as I think it would further my endeavors."

Colonel Pickering, in consequence, wrote to Mr. Morris: —

"NEWBURGH, April 1st, 1783.

"SIR,

"In a letter of the 26th ultimo, addressed to me by Mr. Hodgdon, are these words: 'Mr. Morris insists upon a settlement of your accounts previous to any more advances.'

"I have not forgotten, Sir, your earnest desire to have my accounts settled; it is impossible I should forget it; for nothing hangs upon me with so great a weight. *Peace* is arrived, when I hoped to have engaged in some private calling that would do more than keep my family from starving. But I see that the final settlement of the numerous and extensive accounts of my department, scattered from one end of the Continent to the other, will not be accomplished in six, perhaps not in twelve months. This, you will readily conceive, must render me extremely unhappy. After spending seventeen years in various public services for a bare subsistence, I am now arrived at a period in life which demands that I fix on some employment which shall be advantageous and permanent. Pressed by the tenderest concerns to make such an arrangement, every intervening day that postpones it gives me pain. On this account, therefore, the information repeated in the first paragraph of this letter could not but occasion me much uneasiness; but, as it seemed to imply a want of confidence in me, it was peculiarly distressing. I have formerly felt myself happy in your good opinion, though I confess to you I took no pains to acquire it; for I never anticipate the consequences of my actions, — whether they will procure me censure or applause. When general approbation has followed my endeavors to promote the public good, it has given me pleasure; but when disapprobation, or reproach (as it has sometimes

happened), has ensued, still I have not been without a consolation, — the best, indeed, an honest man can wish for, — a consciousness of upright intentions, and the countenance and encouragement of a few, the wise and good.

“Suffer me to hint at the circumstances under which I was induced to take the direction of the Quartermaster’s department.

“General Greene had abruptly resigned. Congress were exceedingly embarrassed. Some member (who, I know not) named me to succeed him. My consent was asked, and reluctantly given. I was not ignorant of the deranged state of our public affairs, and the total want of a valuable medium. I foresaw the great difficulties that would attend the execution of the office, and therefore, in my first letters on the subject, declared that ‘I expected neither pleasure, nor honor, nor profit.’ From that hour my life has been a series of toil and vexation. Unfortunately, too, no business in which I had formerly been engaged had introduced me to a knowledge of *accounts*; and hence I was not sufficiently aware of the importance of the subject and of the necessity of making those arrangements which alone could effect regular and speedy settlements. The trifling sums received for transacting business of such extent added not a little to my difficulties on this score. Small payments were made on the spur of pressing emergencies, and matters left unfinished. Early in 1781 I endeavored to procure the assistance of a very accomplished accountant; but, after keeping me many months in suspense, he declined serving, *because I could not promise him a regular payment of his salary*. After my return from Virginia, at the close of that year, I engaged another; but public business, that unexpectedly intervened, detained him some months, which, together with my long stay last year in Philadelphia, prevented his joining me until October, 1782.

“All these causes have conspired to put my accounts in arrear, and to occasion some irregularities, by which *I*, though not the *public*, may suffer. The agency of the

department being soon to end, I shall, from every motive, public and private, close all my accounts with as much expedition as the nature of the business will admit. Those of my deputies who have not yet finished their accounts, promise a speedy completion of them.

“Until I accepted this cursed office, though necessity compelled me to live frugally, yet I had the satisfaction of keeping nearly clear of *private* debts; for I had resolved not to encumber the only hope of my family, in case an unlucky accident befell *me*, — my little *patrimony*. But I have not kept my resolution. I am now indebted, for moneys borrowed of my friends since the 22d of February, 1781, for the support of myself and family, upwards of nineteen hundred hard dollars. When I received these loans, I reckoned on my funded certificate of near four thousand dollars, given for my arrearages as a member of the Board of War; but you have lately declared that you fear the public credit will never be established. Some of my friends had expressed the same apprehension, and I have since ordered my *patrimony* to be sold to pay my debts. I had, indeed, an additional motive, just then, to order the sale of my estate. The legislature of New York paying no attention to the recommendation of Congress, nor to my earnest petition, for exemption from suits for public debts, I expected to be left a prey to the avaricious and merciless speculators in public securities. But justice and gratitude to my friends required that their dues should not be left to the discretion of my public creditors. This legislature have, at last, enacted that *execution* shall be *stayed* until the first day of March next.

“This, Sir, is my present situation. If, instead of borrowing, I had appropriated public money for my entire support to the amount of my pay, I should have been justified; for, when I accepted the office, I announced to Congress my poverty, and that I was unable, without a grant of money for the purpose, even to equip myself for the field. But the public wants have not left me at liberty to do what more *prudent* people would not have omitted.

“You can now judge, Sir, what must have been my feelings on reading the paragraph above quoted from Mr. Hodgdon’s letter. The declaration imports either that your confidence in my integrity has ceased, or that, by withholding money, I may be induced to *hasten* the settlement of my accounts. But the latter will thereby be inevitably retarded. If the former has taken place, I shall have nothing more to say on the subject. If Mr. Hodgdon has misapprehended your expression, I shall be sorry to have troubled you with this long letter. As things are now circumstanced, it is of serious consequence to me to be early informed of the ground on which I may expect to stand. I am unhappy enough to read your resignation; but to be consigned over with suspicions to the unequal resources of your successor will be worse. I remain, Sir, with great respect, your most obedient servant.

“TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Q. M. G.*

“P. S. I intended this as a private letter; but if, for any cause, you choose to consider it as a public one, I shall acquiesce.”

The next day he wrote to Mr. Hodgdon a letter, in which he alludes to the preceding one to Mr. Morris, and says:—

“I know not how it will affect him; I hope, agreeably to my wishes; if not, I quit the army directly. But I think it will operate as it should do.”

The following is Mr. Morris’s answer to the letter addressed to him.

“OFFICE OF FINANCE, April 7th, 1783.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have this moment received your letter of the first instant, and read it with as much pain as I believe you to have felt in writing it. I neither give nor withdraw my

confidence on trivial ground. You had it fully, and you have it still, in the same extensive degree as ever.

"I knew some of the circumstances which prevented the settlement of your accounts, and I believed there were others, as from your letter I am now convinced that there were. I did not, therefore, press you so hard on that subject as otherwise I should have done. I have been myself accused and abused in Congress for the forbearance. I shall state to the committee appointed to inspect my office the reasons you assign, and so far consider your letter a public one as to lay it before them. In the mean time, I pray you to urge on the settlement as fast as possible, — I mean the settlement of accounts under my administration.

"On the subject of your own particular affairs I have but little to say; but that little will, I think, be satisfactory. I conceive myself authorized to discharge your arrearages of pay as Commissioner of the Board of War, and will do so whenever you shall think proper.

"I am, with very sincere esteem, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

"ROBERT MORRIS."

To this letter Colonel Pickering replied : —

"NEWBURGH, April 14th, 1783.

"SIR,

"I have been honored with your letter of the 7th, and feel as I ought the force of the obligations so much candor and friendship impose on me. I have nothing so much at heart as to comply with your wishes in the speedy settlement of my public accounts, which is at the same time so essential to my ease and interest.

"In regard to 'my own particular affairs,' which you so kindly notice, — while I receive the benefits to be derived from your indulgence, I wish it to be with the least possible inconvenience to you. With this view I beg leave to inform you, that a draft on Mr. Lovell for two thousand dollars will enable me to reimburse the sums borrowed of my

friends, and conveniently, as they live at Salem. The residue of my arrears as a member of the Board of War may be placed in any situation you think proper, in which I may command it. I recollect that the public were some time ago possessed of bank stock which it was wished to have disposed of: if any remains in that predicament, it would be agreeable to me to have three or four shares, which I might sell again when my business or necessities should require it. The balance Mr. Hodgdon will receive, and in my behalf attend to the whole negotiation whenever you shall please to call for him. With the most respectful attachment and esteem, I remain," &c.

In a letter to Mrs. Pickering, dated at Newburgh, the 6th of April, he recurs to his future course of life.

"Peace does not yet arrive to my relief. I am impatient for the official accounts, that I may be released from public engagements and enter the paths of private life, — that I may engage in pursuits that will insure a support for you and our boys, and that will enable me to live always with you. I am unhappy at every day's absence. I wish to contribute to your pleasure, and to ease you in every burden. I would smooth for you the path of life. 'I would wish to make it elegantly smooth; that it were decked on every side and carpeted with joys.' All things promise fairly. I am encouraged to expect the correspondence of merchants in different quarters. This morning Mr. Gilman,* of Exeter, called upon me. . . . He said my character was well known in New Hampshire, and he doubted not that I should get all the business from thence. . . . If in this way I am enabled to support you and my children agreeably, if I can lay up such a competent fortune as will secure us from want, I shall be satisfied. If I could do this without many years' labor, I should be more pleased; because there are

* John Taylor Gilman, a member of Congress from New Hampshire, and afterwards the Governor of that State.

some studies and pursuits which I should gladly engage in for the benefit of society. I have only to regret that my want of abilities, of learning, and of fortune forbids my carrying those pursuits to such lengths and to such early conclusions as the mischiefs I wish to check and prevent pressingly require. But I will reserve the pleasure of a particular explanation of my views until I can speak to you face to face."

To what objects his philanthropic views had relation, does not appear ; perhaps agriculture and education.

A letter of the 6th of April from Sir Guy Carleton informed General Washington, that he had received official intelligence that preliminary articles of peace with France and Spain were signed on the 20th of January, and that, in pursuance of orders from the King of Great Britain, he should publish, on the 8th of April, proclamations declaring a cessation of arms, as well by sea as by land.

In a letter dated Newburgh, April 6th, addressed to Mr. Hodgdon, Colonel Pickering says :—

"Mr. Williams wrote to me that some of my friends were extremely desirous of my returning to Salem, and some merchants were of opinion it would be most for my interest. I cannot conceive on what grounds the latter form their opinion. However, I have sent my final determination not to return to Massachusetts to peddle in trade or starve in a public office. I have told Mr. Williams that, if this commission plan does not succeed, I will settle in a new country, where, if my life is spared for a few years, I can at least leave a plantation to each of my children."

A letter of the 7th of April to Mr. Hodgdon has already been quoted, in which Colonel Pickering said he had renounced his purpose of buying wild land in

Vermont. In the same letter he went on to speak of a subject of more importance than his private concerns.

“ But a new plan is in contemplation, — no less than forming a *new State* westward of the Ohio. Some of the principal officers of the army are heartily engaged in it. About a week since, the matter was set on foot, and a plan is digesting for the purpose. Enclosed is a rough draught of some propositions respecting it, which are generally approved of. They are in the hands of General Huntington and General [Rufus] Putnam for consideration, amendment, and addition. It would be too tedious to explain to you in writing all the motives to attempt this measure, and all the advantages which will probably result from it. As soon as the plan is well digested, it is intended to lay it before an assembly of the officers, and to learn the inclinations of the soldiers. If it takes, an application will then be made to Congress for the grant and all things depending on *them*. I shall have much to say to you on this subject.”

The propositions were, in substance, — That the United States should purchase of the natives a tract of land described in the plan, being a large portion of what is now the State of Ohio; that, in the first instance, lands should be assigned to the officers and soldiers of the army, to fulfil the engagements of the United States made by certain resolutions of Congress, and that all associators who should actually settle in the new State within one year after it was ready for settlement should receive certain additional quantities of land; that this increased provision should extend to all officers and soldiers who had performed, in the whole, three years' service, whether in service or not at the end of the war; that the surplus lands should be the property of the State;

that every grantee should make certain improvements on his land within a certain time, otherwise it should be forfeited to the State; that, to enable the associators to undertake the settlement of the new State, the United States should defray the expenses of their march thither, furnish utensils of husbandry and live stock necessary for beginning the settlement, one ration of bread and meat for three years to every man, woman, and child, to every soldier a suit of clothes annually, and to every officer and soldier arms and ammunition for the security of the State against the Indians, — the cost of all these articles to be charged to the accounts of arrearages due to the members of the association respectively; that a constitution for the new State should be formed by the members of the association, at a meeting to be called for that purpose, previous to their beginning the settlement, — “the total exclusion of slavery from the State to form an essential and irrevocable part of the constitution”; that the State so constituted should be admitted into the confederacy of the United States; that delegates should be chosen by the associators, at the meeting above mentioned, to represent them in Congress so soon as the new State should be erected; and that the associators should agree on some general temporary rules for the prevention and punishment of crimes and for the preservation of peace and good order.

The concluding proposition was as follows : —

“That, the associators having borne together as brethren the dangers and calamities of war, and feeling that mutual friendship which long acquaintance and common sufferings give rise to, — it being also the obvious dictate of humanity to supply the wants of the needy, and alleviate the distresses of the afflicted, — it shall be an inviolable rule to take

under the immediate patronage of the State the wives and children of such associators, who, having settled there, shall die, or by cause of wounds or sickness be unable to improve their plantations or follow their occupations, during the first twenty-one years; so that such destitute and distressed families shall receive such public aids as, joined with their own reasonable exertions, will maintain them in a manner suitable to the condition of the heads of them; especially that the children, when grown up, may be on a footing with other children, whose parents, at the original formation of the State, were in similar circumstances with those of the former."

Mr. Hodgdon read the "propositions" to Colonel Pickering's school-fellow and friend Mr. Stephen Higginson, then a member of Congress, who exclaimed, "This is Pickering, I swear." The rough draught was in his handwriting, and was, no doubt, his composition, but probably with the introduction of suggestions made by other officers with whom he had conversed. Mr. Hodgdon expressed the opinion, that, even if Congress should grant all that was asked of them, the plan would never be carried into effect. This might have been the case. But the mode here proposed of making a settlement and forming a State in new territory does not seem to be visionary or impracticable. Even if it was so, an enthusiastic scheme of our forefathers, in which so much generosity of sentiment is shown, brought forward at a period in the history of the country presenting a condition of affairs so novel, and to them, after their toils, and dangers, and sufferings, so exciting, is entitled to a kindly regard. As the dawn of the State of Ohio, and, indeed, of the five great States formed out of the territory north-west of the Ohio River, particularly with respect to the perpetual exclusion of

slavery from them, these "propositions" are interesting, and are worthy of preservation.*

In a letter of the 8th of April, Colonel Pickering wrote to his wife : —

"This moment an officer has arrived at head-quarters with despatches from Sir Guy Carleton announcing the arrival of a packet at New York with a confirmation of peace. O, Heaven be praised ! Through many a doubtful day we have been preserved ; and now our wishes are crowned with peace, liberty, and independence ! How cheaply purchased with eight years' war ! How much reason have they to rejoice who are alive to see this day ! "

In a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, dated at Newburgh, the 14th of April, Colonel Pickering wrote : —

"There is a report that official accounts of peace are arrived from France at Philadelphia. I am anxious for it, that we may have our festival ; till then I cannot leave the army : not because the pleasure to be derived from it will detain me ; one hour's domestic bliss is of much more value. Yet I should be unwilling to be absent at the celebration of the day which crowns our toils with glory. Such celebrations would give more pleasure if they took place promptly ; but, in general, so much time is spent in preparation, that expectation grows weary and indifferent. Those, indeed, who on these occasions anticipate nothing with so much delight as bacchanalian revels, have other feelings. But I could never derive any pleasure from scenes of intoxication.

"Just now I was casting my eye over a newspaper, and met with Dr. Smith's advertisement of his Falls plantation to be leased, 'having been occupied last year by Colonel Pickering, Q. M. G., and the year before by his Excellency

* See the "Appendix," No. III. page 546, where they are printed in full.

the Minister of France.' I was sorry to see it. My countrymen eastward will, if they meet with it, think me an extravagant fellow. . . .

"P. S. General [Rufus] Putnam is warmly engaged in the new-planned settlement over the Ohio. He is very desirous of getting Hutchins's map. Mr. Aitken had them to sell. If possible, pray forward me one."

On the 18th of April he wrote to Mrs. Pickering from Newburgh:—

"No day is yet fixed here for rejoicing; and, upon considering the treaty and proclamation,* &c., I am afraid the day is not so near as I had imagined. The proclamation is not of *peace*, but to *cease hostilities*. The final treaty of peace is not yet arrived."

General Washington, having received from a committee of Congress a letter, in which they ask his opinion on military establishments proper to be adopted by the United States on the conclusion of the war, requested some of the principal officers in the army, and among them Colonel Pickering, to communicate to him their opinions on the subject. Mr. Sparks says:†—

"The report handed in by Colonel Pickering, then Quartermaster-General to the army, is interesting from the manner in which many topics are discussed, and particularly from the suggestions it contains respecting the establishment of a military seminary at West Point."

In this report, dated at Newburgh, April 22d, 1783, are the following observations:—

* Agreed upon by Congress on the 11th of April, and published in the American camp on the 19th. See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 425, 567.

† Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 417, note.

“I will take the liberty to add a page or two on the subject of military academies, which have been mentioned as proper to be erected where the Continental arsenals shall be established. At the same places, also, it has been supposed that founderies and manufactories for all kinds of military stores may be established to advantage. But, if these plans are not *impracticable*, I am clear that at present they are *inexpedient*.

“Whence are to come the students at these academies? We have not (and God forbid we ever should have) either a nobility or *noblesse*; and our laws of inheritance will save us from elder brothers to whom business will be unnecessary, as well as from younger sons bred in too much indolence or delicacy to acquire a living by their own industry. And without a standing army none will find an interest in studying the military art, as a profession. The few (and in a country of husbandmen, merchants, and mechanics, they will be very few) whose genius shall prompt and whose fortunes shall enable them to pursue extensively the study of the military art, can travel, and find in Europe schools already established on the most perfect plans, where they may acquire, with the greatest facility, all that knowledge of the military art of which they are capable. All the arts and sciences which form the basis of, or are connected with, the military art, are already, or will be, taught in the American universities, as soon as the respective States shall be able properly to endow them.

“If anything like a military academy in America be practicable at this time, it must be grounded on the permanent military establishment for our frontier posts and arsenals, and the wants of the States, separately, of officers to command the defences on their sea-coasts.

“On this principle it might be expedient to establish a military school, or academy, at West Point; and, that a competent number of young gentlemen might be induced to become students, it might be made a rule, that vacancies

in the standing regiment * should be supplied from thence, — those few instances excepted where it would be just to promote a very meritorious sergeant. For this end, the number which shall be judged requisite to supply vacancies in the standing regiment might be fixed, and the students who are admitted with an expectation of filling them limited accordingly. They might be allowed subsistence at the public expense. If any other youth desired to pursue the same studies at the military academy, they might be admitted, only subsisting themselves.

“These students should be instructed in what is usually called military discipline, tactics, and the theory and practice of fortification and gunnery. The commandant, and one or two other officers of the standing regiment, and the engineers, making West Point their general residence, would be the masters of the academy, and the inspector-general superintend the whole.”

* In the preceding part of his report he estimated that one standing regiment, in addition to a well-regulated militia, would be a sufficient military peace establishment at that time.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Colonel Pickering's Views as to his future Course of Life. — His Fear that the Public Debts will not be paid. — His Liberality towards the Refugees. — Correspondence with General Gates. — Compensation to the Officers of the Army. — The Army ill used by their Country. — Mutiny of Pennsylvania Troops. — Preparations to celebrate the Treaty of Peace. — Refusal of the British to surrender the Frontier Posts. — Noah Webster's Spelling-Book. — His future Distinction predicted.

SOON after the arrival of the news that peace had been made with Great Britain, Colonel Pickering proceeded to carry into effect his long-contemplated plan of going into business as a merchant.

He wrote from Newburgh on the 26th of April, 1783, to Paine Wingate, his brother-in-law : —

“ You will permit me to congratulate you on the return of peace. I have enjoyed with a degree of transport this happy event ; but I confess I should be still more happy could I discover a better disposition among the governments to make a certain provision for the payment of the public debts at home and abroad. No permanent revenues, I fear, will be established ; and positive taxes on lands and other property will appear so burdensome, that the people will probably murmur under the weight, if they do not refuse to bear it. By a Philadelphia paper of the 19th instant, I see that the Assembly of South Carolina have rejected the impost act by a majority of sixty-three to twenty-three.

“ It has for some time past been my intention to settle at Philadelphia. I have had enough of public offices to be tired of them. By returning to Massachusetts, I might

obtain one deemed respectable ; but I know not one in the State which will yield a man more than a decent support, without enabling him to lay up a penny for old age or a destitute family. I have made known to my friends at the eastward my determination to undertake, at Philadelphia, commercial business on commission. . . . The prospects promise success. Should I be disappointed, I should much prefer a settlement in some part of the back country to any other mode of life which I can pursue. I wish, indeed, I were younger ; but, even at this time of life, a new country presents me with prospects more advantageous for my family than any other business I could engage in, that above mentioned excepted. . . . Perhaps it may fall in your way to aid my designs."

In pursuance of these designs, he entered into copartnership with Mr. Hodgdon, by articles of agreement dated the 10th of May, 1783, for the term of two years. The connection was continued, however, much longer. This business did not answer his expectations, not yielding him an income sufficient for the support of his family.

In his correspondence of that period, incidents are mentioned and sentiments expressed by him which have an interest, some of them in relation to himself, his family, or his friends ; others, to public affairs.

On the 19th of May, General Gates, in a desponding letter concerning the illness of his wife, requests Colonel Pickering to lay her case before Dr. Eustis and Dr. Townsend. He likewise makes inquiries respecting the prospects of the officers of the army. He says : —

"The beginning of last winter I took leave of you upon your setting out from Newburgh for Philadelphia. Little did I then think your very great distress would so soon be

my unhappy lot. You were presently relieved by the recovery of Mrs. Pickering; but of such relief I have no prospect. All looks dark, and threatens a fatal issue. I have too much cause to fear you will never see your old friend again. Thus am I upon the verge of being left the most forlorn of mankind; and there is only wanting my death to close the shocking scene. God's will be done. . . .

"I think it will be impossible for me to join the army before their dissolution, as I am told the whole are to be disbanded; but you may know better, who are so much nearer head-quarters. It would give a moment's relief to the melancholy that oppresses me, could I hear from you. Your kind remembrance will come up through the hands of [Major John] Armstrong, who is fixed in Philadelphia. . . .

"How do you go, and how have you been able to go on? I have heard of different schemes that have been proposed to the army. They appeared to me Utopian; I dare say they did so to you. Is the commutation generally accepted? And, if so, is there the smallest probability of the Assemblies of all or any of the States confirming it to the officers? If not, how basely and ungratefully are we treated! I can live, it is true, without it; but I feel as poignantly for the distresses of the poor fellows who have been our faithful companions through the war, as if those distresses were all my own. . . .

"That Heaven may preserve you and yours is the wish of, dear Colonel, your affectionate friend and humble servant,

"HORATIO GATES."

Although Colonel Pickering was not personally interested* in the half pay for life, or commutation, promised by Congress to officers who should serve until the end of the war, his answer shows his sympathy for

* See page 312.

such officers, and his strong sense of the injustice which he rightly anticipated would be done to them by individual States. In his reply to General Gates, dated Newburgh, May 28th, he wrote : —

“Your favor of the 19th I duly received, and lament for your distress. Should the event your heart forebodes take place, your situation, I confess, will be forlorn. My own, so similar at the time you mention, enables me to feel a sympathetic woe. Yet I will not pretend that in any event my distress could equal yours ; for, amidst the anguish of my heart under the expected loss of Mrs. Pickering, I had still some source of consolation in the dear pledges of our mutual love. In that distressing hour I felt relief in appealing to the mercy of that Being to whose wise providence you express your resignation. It is at such periods we are wont to make these appeals. We then see the frailty of every earthly thing, the uncertainty of every earthly enjoyment, and thence we are led to look for support — where indeed it can alone be found — in the goodness of our all-wise, almighty Parent. But when brighter scenes present, such serious impressions are too apt to wear off, and at length to disappear. In kindness, therefore, we are visited with repeated afflictions, if haply we may thence be influenced to fulfil the gracious intentions of the Deity. If I preach, the solemn occasion will excuse it ; and I beg you to receive it as a proof of my sincere regard. . . .

“I am inclined to think that the want of money may induce Congress to consent to the wishes of the Financier in discharging speedily the men engaged for the war. *I* wish it for many reasons, public and personal. . . .

“The commutation is, I believe, universally accepted by the army. Some, I hope the most, of the States will make it good ; but some, there is too much reason to think, will never consent to it, Connecticut in particular.* While the

* See Sparks's “Writings of Washington,” Vol. IX. p. 6, note.

army was necessary to their safety, they were willing the officers should believe in the justice of their country, and that the promised compensation for their extraordinary sufferings and services should never be denied them. But these are already forgotten; the hour of danger is past, and avarice and meanness have usurped the places of gratitude and justice. I have seen, in a life by some years shorter than yours, so many instances of public and private injustice and baseness, as to have often made me sick of the world; but then the goodness of a few, and especially the tender ties of wife and children, have again reconciled me to it. For their sakes I still wish to live; and still do I hope to see you relieved from the melancholy which now oppresses you, in the recovery of Mrs. Gates, the confirmation of her health, and the continuance of your own: being, my dear Sir, with great sincerity, your friend and servant,

“TIMOTHY PICKERING.”

Mrs. Higginson, in a letter of the 19th of May, informs Colonel Pickering that, after living in Beverly some months in a retired manner in order to escape persecution from Whigs in Salem, she has returned to Salem; that she has taken possession of her house there, and, with her daughter, has opened a school; that she has much pleasure in supporting herself; and that she hopes it may be consistent with his interest to return to Salem to live.

She adds: —

“In this I suppose I am selfish; but I readily forgive myself, as I think this spot, where all your connections and former friends are, must be more agreeable to you when you return to private life. . . . We want you here to stem the torrent of curses that are vented on Sunday evenings by the reverend Doctor [Whitaker]. If you recollect Ernulphus’s curses in *Tristram Shandy*, they are weak, insignificant, childish things, compared with that patriotic

divine's against the poor refugees. Our Saviour says, 'Bless your enemies'; the Doctor bids all his hearers curse them, and says *they* 'll be cursed if they don't."

Colonel Pickering's reply, dated at Newburgh, the 15th of June, is evidence of his liberality towards the refugees (but with discrimination), as well as of the constancy of his affection for an old friend who belonged to that class.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I have this evening received your favor of the 19th ultimo, and wait not a moment to acknowledge the pleasure it gave me. . . . I admire the spirit that determined you to the means of independence. It was a virtuous pride, which no one more eminently possesses, which no one can support with more honor. . . . Happy should I be, could I make it consistent with my interest to become your neighbor, as I am your friend. But, though my residence will probably be fixed in Philadelphia, I hope ere long to visit Salem. . . .

"I have been sorry to see the virulent temper so generally manifested against the absentees and refugees *indiscriminately*. There have been many who have been suffered to remain always amongst us, by whose exchange for an equal number of refugees the country would be gainers. The ravings of the reverend Doctor are such as I should expect. His natural disposition, religious principles, and insignificance but on subjects of popular clamor, will account for his bitter curses on refugees. Some there are, indeed, whom the country can never forgive; and, unfortunately, their crimes are imputed to the whole body without distinction. I find it is worth a man's popularity to say a word in favor of the most deserving — of characters truly innocent — of men who, instead of injuring, have, during the war, been rendering benefits to this country! For speaking in favor of such, I perceive, many good men have this year

lost their elections in Massachusetts. Dispositions still more violent appear in other States. Time, which works wonders, may cool them; but it will then be too late to repent.

“ You call Hitty my pupil; but I claim no right to the title of her preceptor: yet, if she can fancy herself under any obligations of duty, I beg she would discharge them by writing me, with her own hand, two lines of acknowledgment. I will then immediately sign a *quitclaim* to everything but her friendship; yours and hers I hope ever to preserve.”

After the receipt of satisfactory intelligence that peace had been made, Colonel Pickering was much occupied in the disbanding of the troops, and in making sale of various military stores. In general, his directions for the latter purpose to the subordinates in his department would not interest the reader; but the following inquiry concerning the chain which was stretched across the Hudson River at West Point, to prevent the passage of British ships of war,—a few links of which are preserved at that place as a Revolutionary relic,—is deemed an exception. It is in a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, dated at Newburgh, the 22d of May.

“ I wish also to be informed weekly of the price of bar iron. Application has been made for old cannon, shot, and shells. Nancarron once run up some cannon. I suspect he will give so much higher price for them as will pay for their transportation to Philadelphia. Please to inquire of him what he will give per ton. The great chain at West Point contains upwards of sixty tons of excellent Stirling iron. The links, you may recollect, are about thirty inches long, made of bars about two inches square. If it be sold here, I am doubtful if it will fetch much more than half the price

of bar iron. Pray inquire if it will answer to send it to Philadelphia."

On the 26th of May, Congress passed a resolution, that furloughs should be granted to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers enlisted to serve during the war,—who should be discharged as soon as the definitive treaty should be concluded, together with a proportionate number of commissioned officers; and that the Secretary of War and the Commander-in-Chief should take the proper measures for conducting those troops, in a manner convenient to them and to the States through which they should pass, to their respective homes.

Not knowing of the passage of this resolution, Colonel Pickering wrote to his brother, on the 27th of May, from Newburgh:—

"I am impatient to have the army disbanded, that I may return to dwell with my family and engage in private pursuits. I am impatient, because, from the slackness of the States in paying taxes, the embarrassments of public officers are rather increasing. I am impatient, because, by the dissolution of the army, our public burdens will be so essentially lessened, and the States thereby enabled to commence those measures which are necessary to do justice to the army and the public creditors. I hope the men enlisted for the war (which comprehends more than half the army) will shortly be discharged. It is the wish of the Financier; and his opinion, grounded on the most cogent reason, I hope will prevail. That reason is, that, if the whole army be long continued together, they will eat up the money with which he could otherwise give them two or three months' pay when discharged. If the definitive treaty were arrived, I think the whole army would be discharged, and the few troops necessary on frontier posts, and for guards of the arsenals,

engaged on new and cheaper terms. This will be called the *peace establishment*, which Congress now have under consideration."

On the same day he informed Mr. Hodgdon that he had requested money of Mr. Morris, because the sale of some public horses yielded neither money nor notes. He added : —

"I told the officers of the army that, as they had not received their notes for their three months' promised pay, I would accept their orders on their paymasters. This was agreeable to them, and raised the average price of the horses to fifty-two dollars."

Mrs. Pickering wrote to him on the 27th of May, from Philadelphia, that their three children were ill, — one of them dangerously ill, — and that, in consequence, she herself was not well, and she much needed his presence.

He replied on the 5th of June, from Newburgh : —

"I was grieved at your situation as described in your letter, surrounded with sick children, yourself unwell ; and grieved I am, also, that it is impossible for me to go to your assistance. I pray God to preserve you and them, and to restore all to perfect health. . . .

"The army are beginning to separate. All the men enlisted for the war (which comprehends a great majority) are to be immediately sent home. A proportion of the officers are to go with them.* . . . When the army is thus diminished, my cares will be somewhat lessened. This movement of the army will prevent my journey to Albany, &c., until the troops which are to be discharged shall be gone."

* See Journals of Congress, May 26th, 1783.

In several letters he wrote in strong terms of disapprobation of the manner in which a large portion of the troops were sent home on furlough, in pursuance of the resolution, before mentioned, of the 26th of May.

Thus, on the 7th of June, to Mr. Hodgdon:—

“The army is disgusted at the manner in which they are *sent about their business*,—without pay, and without even thanks, for eight years’ toils and dangers! ’Tis painful to think of it, and of the wretched condition of great numbers in consequence of the service.”

To Mr. Hodgdon again, on the 12th:—

“The army has been separated in a manner the most disgusting that could have been invented. Universal dissatisfaction has appeared. Neither Congress nor the C. in C. [Commander-in-Chief] have paid the smallest tribute to, or even acknowledgment of, such meritorious services. This circumstance, joined to the distress of the army for want of even as much pay as would defray the expenses of their journey home, has justly excited general disgust. The officers of the York line have presented a manly, elegant, and affectionate address to the Baron S[teuben], but have not even taken leave of the C. in C. The address and answer, I understand, will be published.”

To Mrs. Pickering, on the 17th:—

“The army think, and justly, that they are ill used by their country. They have been dismissed abruptly, without money, and even (what it was easy to give) without thanks.”

And to his brother, on the 18th:—

“We have yet no news of the definitive treaty; the greater part of the army is, however, discharged, though

not in a manner that was acceptable. For want of pay their distresses were unexampled. They had neither the means of paying their little debts in camp, nor their necessary expenses in going home. Their sufferings and services seem already to be forgotten by multitudes. I hope in time that, on proper information to the people and Assemblies, they will feel the demands of justice and gratitude, and take effectual means to satisfy them. The half pay, or commutation, is as really due to the officers, by solemn contract, as their original pay. It does not concern me; but I wish the army to receive their dues, and that the country may recover its reputation for justice and good faith."

On the 24th of June he wrote to his wife concerning the mutiny of troops in Philadelphia, where she then resided:—

"Though in the midst of tumult, I hope my dear Becky remains undisturbed. An express has arrived this afternoon, by whom Mr. Hodgdon has sent me an account of the mutiny of the Pennsylvania troops.* Before this reaches

* Mr. Hodgdon, in a letter dated at Philadelphia, the 22d of June, says:—

"The bearer comes express from the President of Congress to the Commander-in-Chief. The business I believe to be the mutiny of the day, of which take the following as an authentic account:—

"Soon after the arrival of the troops from Charleston, it was judged best to remove some of the others out of the barracks for their reception, as they were incapable of holding all of them. Previous to the removal, the furloughs were tendered them, and refused. The consequence was, an order to pay no man his three months' but such as should receive a furlough. A few complied, and did receive them; the remainder were marched out of town for Lancaster. On the road they mutinied, and, having again appointed their sergeants to command, determined to return to the city. They arrived here about one o'clock, and immediately paraded before the State House, from whence they made detachments to the several deposits of stores. I was honored with five sentries, and no person could approach. These precautions being taken, they demanded an audience with Congress. General St. Clair, Colonel Porter, and others addressed them, but for some time to little effect. The President, coming out of Congress, was arrested and ordered back, but afterwards suffered to proceed. About four o'clock they were prevailed on to retire to the barracks, and depute six of their number to meet Congress at six

you, I trust the uproar will cease: should it be otherwise, I think *you* will have nothing to fear. Nobody can be interested to disturb you, and you dwell in a quiet part of the town. However, if the mutiny continues, it may be advisable to suspend John's going to school, and to keep the children out of the street. But your prudence would manage all this as it should be, without any suggestion from me; but a husband's and a parent's care is wont to be officious.

"Orders are given for the march of troops hence to quell the mutineers; but I have no idea that it will be necessary to march far. 'Tis a pity that five hundred undisciplined troops (and such I understand are the mutineers) should spread and continue terror through that great city."

In the following letter to Mr. Hodgdon, dated at Newburgh, the 27th of August, are shown the prepara-

o'clock, and relate their particular grievances. Thus the matter rests at the writing of this, — five o'clock. It seems they demand one month's pay in specie, three months' pay in notes payable at six months, and a full settlement of their accounts, with a funded certificate for the balances due them respectively."

In a second letter from Mr. Hodgdon, dated the 23d of June, is the following passage:—

"Another express is called for, the business the same as by the last. At six o'clock last evening, Congress met; and, though nothing of their doings has transpired, appearances evince that they sensibly feel the insult of yesterday. The soldiery has had no communication with them, nor will they have, be the event what it may. I sincerely pity Congress in their present unprotected state. They feel themselves of no importance, and, if something is not done to give energy to their proceedings, they must shortly appear contemptible. What they have done to occasion a total desertion by the States, and make themselves a derision to individuals, I am yet to learn. That the army at large is hardly treated, they and all men allow; but that they have been the cause of it, they positively deny. The present commotion springs from a mutinous disposition, once and again successful, and C. [Congress] think it has been cherished and nursed by the officers of the line, — a belief that aggravates the insult exceedingly, as they suppose that this line has, upon a general scale, fared as well or better than any other in the Union. But I will not enlarge. The foregoing observations were collected from a recent interview with two or three principal characters, and is in confidence."

See, on this subject, Journals of Congress, June 21st and July 1st; Marshall's "Life of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 615; and Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 454, 458.

tions making by the army for the celebration of the definitive treaty of peace, the early arrival of which was expected. The refusal of the British to surrender the frontier posts is also mentioned.

“I missed of the General; he went down the river. He will not return again, unless to celebrate the definitive treaty at West Point, when he will invite *Messieurs le Congrès* to accompany him. There is a mighty colonnade erecting, near two hundred feet long and eighty broad. Twenty thousand lamps are made, and the posts erected to display the fireworks extend a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards. I wish the winter storms may not demolish the colonnade before the treaty arrives.

“Head-quarters are moved, bag and baggage, which will ease me of some trouble.

“Colonel Villefranche and Captain Fairley, who went with Baron Steuben to Canada, returned yesterday. Haldiman would not suffer the Baron to see the frontier posts. He said the war was not over; there was only a cessation of hostilities; and that he should surrender no post until he received explicit orders from home. So Steuben is come back; but, being unwell, he stopped at Saratoga, and sent the two gentlemen forward with despatches to the General. Villefranche is gone on to Princeton. By him I wrote to the General that I should suspend all preparations* until I received his further orders. But for this I should have set out to-morrow for the northward. I am really glad that this unexpected turn has stopped expensive proceedings that must have been fruitless. You will judge a little of that northern climate by this circumstance, that on the tenth instant they had ice in Canada as thick as a dollar. It was indeed extraordinary, but the winter there sets in early. The two gentlemen told me, they said in Canada it was too late to *visit* the frontier posts on the lakes, even if they were permitted to proceed. . . .

* For taking possession of the frontier posts.

"If the whole detachment should not have marched, be pleased to get my unmade suit of clothes forwarded under Davis's care. My wife will give them to you. The definitive treaty *may* arrive, and I have only a turned coat to appear in. Please to desire my wife to wrap up the bundle in divers folds of osnaburgs, to prevent its wearing or staining."

In general, Colonel Pickering was indifferent to public shows ; but he was so much exhilarated by the news of peace, that he appears to have entered heartily into the celebration of the definitive treaty. He alludes to it in the following letter to his wife, dated at Newburgh, the 29th of August:—

"It is not a fortnight since I left you. . . . As I was musing, on my journey, I endeavored to contrive how you should pay me a visit. We all hope the definitive treaty will soon arrive. Great preparations have been and are making at West Point to celebrate that event. I asked myself why you could not be present. We have a chair, and the Major [Hodgdon] will be solicitous to come. Why can't you come together? 'But the roads are bad.' True, on one route ; but you may travel by Princeton, Brunswick, Elizabethtown, and so to King's Ferry, where I can meet you in my barge, and bring you to West Point and Newburgh. What say you to this? But this will be an occasion so extraordinary, and the exhibition so splendid, I wish greatly that John could accompany you. He is old enough to remember it as long as he lives. . . .

"By the post I desired the Major to call on you for my unmade suit, that I might get it made up here before the event in question takes place."

Colonel Pickering informed his wife, on the 27th of May, that he intended shortly to make a tour to the northward, to Albany and other places, to dispose of

public property in that quarter, and said he should “also be gratified in viewing the scenes of action at Bennington and Saratoga, which led to the important event of the capture of Burgoyne.” The excursion, however, was postponed. On the 8th of September he wrote to her on that subject:—

“To-morrow morning I set out on a tour of pleasure and of business jointly. Dr. Eustis, and Major Cogswell, and Mr. Anspach are in the company. We intend to visit Saratoga, Ticonderoga, and Crown Point; on our return, to see Bennington, the capital of Vermont, Schenectady, and possibly Fort Schuyler. It may be a ten days’ or a fortnight’s tour.

“September 9th.—It rains, and our journey must be suspended till the weather changes. Every information concurs to show that the British will probably leave New York early in October.”

On the same day (the 9th) he wrote to his brother:—

“I believe that New York will be evacuated early in October. The madness of the violent Whigs has retarded this measure by exciting the fears of thousands of well-disposed people, who have been within the British lines, and thereby driving them from the country, to its great injury, and the no small emolument of the British, who will get Nova Scotia, &c., well peopled.”

He wrote again to his wife on the 29th of September, from Newburgh, respecting the celebration:—

“Last evening I returned from the northward. . . . And you had, as I proposed, determined to make me a visit. . . . But must it depend on a contingency—the arrival of the definitive treaty? or the departure of the British from New York? Whichever event comes first will occasion a public entertainment and display of the fireworks

at West Point, and I will expect you. But if neither happens while the weather and the roads are tolerable, I will save you the trouble of so long a journey. In three days I can easily travel to Philadelphia. I do not, however, mean to forbid your coming hither, but only to save you from the fatigue of a journey, if it should not be your choice, independent of a public exhibition of fireworks, &c., on so joyful an occasion as either of those events before mentioned."

In a letter, dated at Springfield, the 29th of September, Mr. Sargeant, his brother-in-law, wrote to him as follows:—

"We had some pleasing expectations that you would come to the northward this fall. I hope we shall not be disappointed. I want to talk over many of the affairs of the war. . . . Your sister wants to catechize you a little for your spending so much of your time in the service of the public. She fears you have not sufficiently regarded your own interest: 'Tis the only fault she has, I can't make the dear woman quite so much of a patriot as I could wish."

The celebrity which the name of Noah Webster has attained lends an interest to the following letter. It appears by it that the numerous duties of Colonel Pickering's office did not prevent him from turning his attention to the subject of education, in regard both to its public importance and to the instruction of his own children. The letter is addressed to his wife, and is dated at Newburgh, the 31st of October.

"By the eastern post yesterday I was lucky enough to receive the new Spelling-Book [Webster's] I mentioned in my last, and, instead of sleeping (for I had a waking fit which prevented me), I read it through last night, except that I only examined a part of the different tables. I am,

much pleased with it. The author is ingenious, and writes from his own experience as a schoolmaster, as well as the best authorities ; and the time will come when no authority, as an English grammarian, will be superior to his own. It is the very thing I have so long wished for, being much dissatisfied with any spelling-book I had seen before. I now send you the book, and request you to let John take it to his master, with the enclosed letter ; for I am determined to have him instructed upon this new, ingenious, and at the same time easy plan. There are, you will see by the Introduction, two more parts to come to complete the plan. I am a stranger to Mr. Webster, but I intend, when I can find leisure, to write him on the subject, using the liberty (which he requests) to suggest some little matters which may be altered and improved in his next edition ; for I think the work will do honor to his country, and I wish it may be perfect. Many men of literature might think it too trifling a subject ; but I am of a different opinion, and am happy that a gentleman of Mr. Webster's genius and learning has taken it up. All men are pleased with an elegant pronunciation, and this new Spelling-Book shows children how to acquire it with ease and certainty."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

General Washington's Farewell Address to the Army. — Cannons to be presented to the Comte De Grasse. — Colonel Pickering draws up the Answer of the Officers to the Farewell Address. — His Remarks on the Address and on the Answer. — General Knox's Draught of an Answer. — Evacuation of New York. — Celebration of Peace. — Friendly Letters between Colonel Pickering and his College Classmate, Major Upham, of the British Army.

CONGRESS having issued a proclamation, dated the 18th of October, 1783, thanking the armies of the United States for their faithful services, ordering that such part of the troops as were enlisted for the war should be discharged, and permitting the officers on furlough to retire from the service, General Washington, on the 2d of November, issued his "Farewell Orders to the Armies of the United States."

It does not appear that Colonel Pickering ever had any cause for enmity to General Washington, or that Washington ever addressed to him an angry word; so that it is difficult to account for a hardness towards Washington which occasionally betrays itself in his letters. A reason suggested by some of his observations about flattery, as well as by his natural disposition, may have had an influence in the case; but it is not an entirely satisfactory explanation. This is, that, as he entertained a less exalted opinion than most of the officers did of Washington's military talents, the fulsome adulation on the part of some of them excited his disgust, and so drew from him expressions of an opposite character. The application of these remarks will

be seen on reading his letters relating to the "Farewell Orders," and to the answer presented by the officers; which was drawn up by him. His opinion that the "Orders" were too long, and that the title given to them was not a happy one, may be just; but he undervalues them. He refers to them in the following passage in a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, dated at Newburgh, the 5th of November. After intimating that he shall not go to Philadelphia until towards the end of the month, he proceeds: —

"This delay will disappoint one whose expectations I wish ever to gratify; but more business remains to be done this month, preparatory to the winter's settlement, than I looked for. I expect, too, that the British will leave New York; and I would not choose, nor would it be proper for me, to be absent then. The dissolution of the army will follow of course, and this will require my being here.

"Yesterday General Knox sent me General Washington's 'Farewell Orders.' You will doubtless see them in print, with the *answer* (if the term is admissible as the counterpart of *orders*), — though *orders* seems to be an unlucky title (given by *son Excellence* himself) for an *affectionate taking of leave*. Truly — but it will be safest for you to make your own comments when you see them; or wait a little, and some zealous devotee will save you the trouble, and at a dash declare, that 'they proceeded from the immediate inspiration of Heaven.' They are very long; which I am sorry for, unless they contained more. I wish they would better correspond with such an answer as *might be given*. What sort of answer will be made, I know not. Knox desires me to go to the Point [West Point] to-day, to *consult upon it*; and I am going. You will imagine to what kind of address I shall put my name: to such a one you will see it, or not at all. He [Washington] has virtues to which I would pay the tribute due."

In the same letter he speaks as follows of two brass cannons, trophies taken from the British, intended to be presented to the Comte De Grasse :—

“By the way, General Knox wrote me, a day or two since, that the Commander-in-Chief was importunate to have sent on the two six-pounders designed for Comte De Grasse. They are finished by Billings, of Poughkeepsie. I saw them yesterday, and they are neatly done, with pertinent emblems. But, pray, to whom are those two to be presented which the Frenchman is doing in Philadelphia? You carried me, to see one of them; and it has ever lain in my mind, that those were for Comte De Grasse. However, the two engraved by Billings will be forwarded in a day or two, and that pair preferred which are most elegantly executed; for I am confident there are these duplicates.”

He received from General Knox the following letter, dated at West Point the 12th of November :—

“The officers universally agree to the Address. If you will please to come down to-morrow, we will present it. The General has not yet arrived, but he will be here certainly to-day. I am,” &c.

On that day he wrote to Mrs. Pickering, from Newburgh :—

“Mr. Hodgdon told me (what I expected) that you had sent me a letter in the mail that was stolen. But do not let that accident prevent your writing by the post. If impertinent people now and then open our letters, they will discover no mischief; but if they have *hearts*, they may learn to love as *we* do; and surely the world will be nothing the worse for it. . . .

“The Commander-in-Chief was to be at West Point to-night. You have doubtless seen in the newspapers his

Farewell Address (called Orders) to the army. It was thought proper that the officers here should return an answer. The answer agreed on universally is enclosed. 'Tis to be presented to the General to-morrow. Perhaps your curiosity may prompt you to read it; but let nobody else read it, the Major [Hodgdon] excepted, until you see it published in the newspapers. The answer is to be presented to the General by a committee, who are General McDougall, General Knox, and your humble servant. Though it is rather modest, or, in other words, does not *abound* with *panegyric*, yet I think it will be *graciously* received; for there is enough in it to please a modest man."

On the 16th of November he wrote to Mrs. Pickering:—

"Those happy events, the hopes of which animated me during the war, at length have arrived. The definitive treaty of peace is concluded, and will be celebrated by the Commander-in-Chief and the officers of the army in New York on the 1st of December. The British are to evacuate the city on the 22d instant.* I have informed Mr. Hodgdon of this, and invited him to meet me there. I have also told him that I was almost tempted to ask the favor of your company, . . . but I am almost afraid to hazard you on such a journey at this disagreeable season. . . . By the last post I sent you the proposed address of the officers to the Commander-in-Chief. A few words were afterwards altered; and yesterday we presented it to him. I send by this conveyance a copy of it to Mr. Hodgdon for publication: of course you will see it complete in the newspapers."

To Mr. Hodgdon he wrote on the same day as follows:—

* Delayed till the 25th.

“I have the pleasure of announcing to you, that Sir Guy Carleton has fixed on the 21st instant for the evacuation of his outposts, and on the 22d for the complete evacuation of the city of New York and its dependencies. In consequence, two companies of artillery commanded by Major Bowman [Bauman?], with four six-pounders (all trophies, engraved with the times and places of their capture from the enemy), the light infantry, and the First and Fourth Massachusetts Regiments, have this day marched for the environs of Kingsbridge, to be prepared to take possession as the British relinquish the posts. The whole detachment will amount to eight hundred or a thousand men. On the 1st of December the Commander-in-Chief intends to celebrate in New York the definitive treaty of peace: and, that all persons disposed to be present may have notice thereof, the enclosed garrison order is to be published in the newspapers. You will be pleased to hand it to the printers in Philadelphia without delay.

“I also enclose you a letter and address, which were presented to the Commander-in-Chief yesterday. The whole are written just in the manner the printers are to publish them.* . . .

“By Tuesday or Wednesday next I shall leave this place and join the detachment near Kingsbridge, and enter the enemy’s posts with them. I shall probably remain at New York until the celebration of the peace is over; soon after which (perhaps directly from the city) I purpose to visit Philadelphia. You will have an inclination to be present at the celebration, and I shall be happy to meet you there. I am almost tempted to invite Mrs. Pickering; but the season is disagreeable, and I do not know to whom she could commit the care of the children in her absence. At any rate, I would not have her come crowded and jolted in the stage.

“Mrs. Knox tells me she shall go, with all her family, into the city in three or four days after we have possession,

* Instructions are here inserted in regard to punctuation, Italics, and capitals.

remain till the celebration of peace, and then proceed *home* to Boston, — no more to return.

“West Point and dependencies will be left with one regiment; all the rest of the troops will be discharged in December, as soon as the New York business is finished. So large a body of troops go in to prevent the mischiefs which the violence of parties might otherwise occasion, before the civil power obtains its due influence.* . . .

“The public business on which Kell is sent, I hope, will be promptly accomplished. It will be impossible for me to fulfil my duty or the General’s orders without cash.”†

Mr. Hodgdon and Mrs. Pickering determined to attend at the celebration, and he informed Colonel Pickering that he had engaged a passage from Philadelphia to New York “in the stage-wagon that goes through in two days,” and that for their comfort in the carriage he had agreed to pay for three seats.

Supposing the fireworks to have been previously prepared at West Point, the small sum of one thousand dollars, still required for the celebration at New York of so important an event as a general peace, and the difficulty of procuring that small sum, may, in these days of wealth and profusion, excite a smile.

Colonel Pickering wrote another letter to Mr. Hodgdon, on the 16th of November, on the same all-important article of “cash,” saying : —

“I have sent Kell express to Philadelphia for the purpose of bringing on the five thousand dollars for which I last wrote you, and an additional sum of one thousand dollars

* On the 19th, Sir Guy Carleton wrote to Washington, “I have received repeated information, . . . that a deliberate combination has been formed to plunder the town whenever the King’s troops shall be withdrawn.” If such a plan was contemplated, no attempt was made to put it in execution. See Sparks’s “Writings of Washington,” Vol. VIII. pp. 546, 501.

† See the next letter.

in *cash*, or in orders on somebody at New York who will certainly answer them. The movement of the detachment of artillery, light infantry, and two regiments of infantry to the city, and their demands for wood and forage for one month, or at least three weeks, together with the expenses to which I shall be put in fulfilling the views of the Commander-in-Chief relative to the celebration of the peace, require that I be supplied with one thousand dollars in cash. To insure to me a supply in time, and to furnish the Paymaster-General [Peirce] with another thousand dollars, to enable him to give their subsistence to those officers who go with the troops to New York, the Commander-in-Chief has written to Governor Clinton, requesting the loan of two thousand dollars, to be repaid by Mr. Peirce and me as soon as we receive the money from Philadelphia. But whether the Governor has any money by him is uncertain. . . . Be pleased to apply instantly to the Superintendent of Finance with information of the nature and necessity of this demand."

To Mr. Hodgdon he wrote again from Newburgh on the 17th of November. He says:—

"Mr. Demler has returned from the Governor, who unfortunately had no money; so that a supply by Kell, either in cash or orders payable in New York at sight, is of absolute necessity. . . .

"By Kell you will receive authentic copies of the officers' answer to the *Orders*. I think it may be marked as the Italians do some strains of their music,—*moderato*; and yet I think it must have been tolerably acceptable. In one passage the word *magnanimity* was proposed where I had written *prudence*; and, as there is magnanimity in a *firm perseverance*, I did not scruple to make the alteration. The committee for drafting the answer were General McDougall, General Knox, and T. P. The first was busy, and wrote nothing; the second had written, but said he had not finished. There is a boldness in his conceptions which

pleases me; there were many passages which struck me very agreeably; but he declared his preference of the other, and it was universally adopted, with a few verbal alterations. It is sufficiently long, and it seemed proper that it should bear some proportion to the Orders.* These gave fair openings to the remarks on the conduct of some of the States, which appeared to be well warranted, and which gave a due length to the answer, without stuffing it with fulsome adulation. When I next hear from or see you, I shall learn what opinion is formed of it."

The answer was presented on the 15th, with the following note:—

"SIR,

"The officers of the part of the army who agreed on the enclosed address having committed to us the honor of presenting it, with great pleasure we now offer to your Excellency this testimony of their affectionate attachment and respect.

We have the honor to be, with perfect consideration, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servants,

"A. McDougall, *Major-General*.

"H. Knox, *Major-General*.

"T. Pickering, *Quartermaster-General*."

The answer was as follows:—

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY, GENERAL WASHINGTON, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

"We, the officers of the part of the army remaining on the banks of the Hudson, have received your Excellency's serious and farewell address to the armies of the United States. We beg your acceptance of our unfeigned thanks

* General Washington's address occupies five pages in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. p. 491; the answer is about half as long.

for the communication, and your affectionate assurances of inviolable attachment and friendship. If your attempts to insure to the armies the just, the promised rewards of their long, severe, and dangerous services have failed of success, we believe it has arisen from causes not in your Excellency's power to control. With extreme regret do we reflect on the occasion which called for such endeavors. But, while we thank your Excellency for these exertions in favor of the troops you have so successfully commanded, we pray it may be believed, that in this sentiment our own particular interests have but a secondary place, and that even the ultimate ingratitude of the people (were that possible) could not shake the patriotism of those who suffer by it. Still, with pleasing wonder and with grateful joy shall we contemplate the glorious conclusion of our labors. To that merit in the Revolution, which, under the auspices of Heaven, the armies have displayed, posterity will do justice; and the sons will blush whose fathers were their foes. Most gladly would we cast a veil on every act which sullies the reputation of our country. Never should the page of history be stained with its dishonor; even from our memories should the idea be erased.

"We lament the opposition to those salutary measures which the wisdom of the Union has planned; measures which alone can recover and fix on a permanent basis the credit of the States; measures which are essential to the justice, the honor, and interest of the nation. While she was giving the noblest proofs of magnanimity, with conscious pride we saw her growing fame, and, regardless of present sufferings, we looked forward to the end of our toils and dangers, to brighter scenes in prospect. There we beheld the Genius of our country dignified by sovereignty and independence, supported by justice, and adorned with every liberal virtue. There we saw patient Husbandry, fearless, extend her cultured fields, and animated Commerce spread her sails to every wind. There we beheld fair Science lift her head, with all the Arts attending in her train. There,

blessed with Freedom, we saw the human mind expand; and, throwing aside the restraints which confined it to the narrow bounds of *country*, it embraced the *world*. Such were our fond hopes, and with such delightful prospects did they present us. Nor are we disappointed. Those animating *prospects* are now changed and changing to *realities*; and actively to have contributed to their production is our pride, our glory. But JUSTICE alone can give them stability. In that JUSTICE we still believe. Still we hope that the prejudices of the misinformed will be removed, and the arts of false and selfish popularity, addressed to the feelings of avarice, defeated. Or, in the worst event, the world, we hope, will make the just distinction. We trust, the disingenuousness of a few will not sully the reputation, the honor, and dignity of the great and respectable majority of the States.

“We are happy in the opportunity just presented of congratulating your Excellency on the certain conclusion of the *definitive treaty of peace*. Relieved at length from long suspense, our warmest wish is to return to the bosom of our country, to resume the character of citizens; and it will be our highest ambition to become useful ones. To your Excellency this great event must be peculiarly pleasing; for, while at the head of her armies, urged by patriot virtues and magnanimity, you persevered, under the pressure of every possible difficulty and disappointment, in the pursuit of the great objects of the war, — the freedom and safety of your country, — your heart panted for the tranquil enjoyments of peace. We cordially rejoice with you that the period of indulging them has arrived so soon. In contemplating the blessings of liberty and independence, — the rich prize of eight years’ hardy adventure, — past sufferings will be forgotten; or, if remembered, the recollection will serve to heighten the relish of present happiness. We sincerely pray God this happiness may long be yours, and that, when you quit the stage of human life, you may receive from the

UNERRING JUDGE the rewards of valor exerted to save the oppressed, — of patriotism and disinterested virtue.

“WEST POINT, 15th November, 1783.”

Many Whigs in the State of New York, some of them members of the legislature, manifested a disposition to adopt harsh measures, contrary to the treaty of peace, against the Tories who remained in the State after the termination of the Revolution; and Colonel Pickering wrote an article, dated in April, 1784, under the signature “Spectator,” addressed to “The Printer of the New York Packet,” (but whether published or not I do not know,) in which he urged a more humane and generous course of conduct. He had previously been happy to avail himself of an opportunity to exemplify his views in the following letter to Mr. Joshua Upham,* his classmate and chum at Harvard College, who had borne arms on the side of the mother country, and who was about to depart from the city of New York with the British army. Mr. Upham entertained like liberal sentiments.

“WEST POINT, November 14th, 1783.

“DEAR SIR,

“After an absence of so many years and a long contest which had continued the separation, when peace returned I expected the pleasure of seeing you; but, the time of your departure is so near at hand, an interview will be impossible. I beg you therefore to accept this evidence of my remembrance of you as a valued acquaintance and friend, the impressions of whose worth the prejudices of party have not obliterated; being, dear Sir, with great regard, your most obedient servant,

“T. PICKERING.

“MAJOR UPHAM.”

* Subsequently a judge of the Superior Court of the Province of New Brunswick.

To this the following answer was returned :—

“NEW YORK, November 18th, 1783.

“DEAR SIR,

“I thank you for your obliging letter of the 14th. Since the termination of the late unhappy public contest, I have ever promised myself the pleasure of meeting you before I should leave the country. The time of my departure is now so near that I cannot have that pleasure. This I very much regret. Am exceedingly gratified at the liberality I have experienced from the gentlemen of your army. Hope their example will soon be followed by my countrymen in general. The public quarrel at an end, why should individuals continue the contest?

“I leave the country for the winter from pecuniary considerations, not from resentment; nor am I ashamed to confess that I very much regret the separation, though for a time only. I need not assure you that I look back to our former friendship with much pleasure. It is not possible that difference in opinion on national questions could have abated private friendships. I hope, at some future period, not far distant, to meet you in peace and quiet, and when every personal animosity and individual resentment shall be forgotten by all parties and descriptions of our countrymen. Accept my best wishes for your happiness, and believe me to be, dear Sir, most sincerely, your friend and humble servant,

“JOSHUA UPHAM.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

Necessities of the Officers on the Disbanding of the Army.—

Colonel Pickering a Candidate for the Office of Secretary of War.—He declines being a Candidate for an Office in the Treasury Department.—Traits in his Character.—His Remarks on Magistrates in a new Country.—Death of his Mother.

THE following letter to Mr. Hodgdon repeats the story of the poverty of the public treasury, the necessities of the army officers, and Colonel Pickering's sympathy for them:—

“NEWBURGH, January 12th, 1784.

... “A larger portion than I expected of the money I last received has also been paid to officers in lieu of transporting their baggage. I was prompted by my own feelings, and General Knox's very urgent representations, to make the gentlemen liberal allowances, as essentially requisite to enable them to travel home without begging or extreme distress; they having received no pay these six months, nor any subsistence * for the last month.”

General Lincoln, the Secretary of War, having sent in his resignation, Congress, on accepting it, voted that he should continue to perform the duties of the office until the 12th of November, 1783.† Afterwards, on the 26th of January, 1784, when the subject of a successor was in agitation, Mr. Hodgdon wrote to Colonel Pickering, saying that, in a letter to Mr.

* Money in lieu of rations.

† Journals of Congress, October 29th, 1783.

Elbridge Gerry, he had put the question, "Might not our friend Pickering be eligible? . . . I only suggest it for your consideration, as I have never heard him say a syllable on the subject." This occasioned a correspondence between Colonel Pickering on the one part and Mr. Gerry and General Mifflin on the other.

To Mr. Gerry Colonel Pickering wrote, under date of Philadelphia, February 20th, 1784, as follows:—

"Since my arrival here, Mr. Hodgdon has handed me your favor, . . . in which you kindly answer his intimation. I have hence been led to reflect on the matter, and for many reasons cannot but express a wish to obtain the appointment. The business of the war office in time of peace will not exclude one from an attention to private concerns; and, on that principle, I imagined an appointment (if any were made) would be fixed. I mean, that, the duties of the office being in time of peace greatly circumscribed, a moderate salary would be allowed, in expectation that the Secretary might engage in private business. On this principle it would be agreeable to me; and, I should suppose, advantageous to the public. With every part of the business of the office I have been conversant; and the office I have last held in the army has made me acquainted with every additional object which can now come under consideration at the war office. If any troops are to be kept up, if any establishments are to be made for frontier posts, the method of furnishing and transporting the necessary supplies will be familiar to me; and the management of the whole business may be committed to the Secretary at War as the principal executive officer for what, during an extensive war, is necessarily distributed into many departments.

"I might mention some grounds for claiming the office, such as, that the appointment of Quartermaster-General was, in fact, only a *suspension* of my seat at the Board [of War]; . . . that, instead of receiving any gratuity at the close of my service, my pay was declared to be reduced, from the

commencement of 1783, to near one half the original appointment; and that I never made any claims for half pay or commutation, although a very large proportion of officers who received it were in service for much shorter periods.

"I have not a doubt of your friendship in the matter, as far as shall consist with the public good and the justice due to others. It would give me pain to see the office held as a sinecure by a man who did not need or deserve the indulgence, but none to find it bestowed on one more deserving than myself."

Mr. Gerry replied, in a letter dated at Annapolis, the 26th of February, 1784:—

"I have communicated your letter of the 20th to several confidential friends, who assure me of their disposition to appoint you to the office therein mentioned. Another gentleman * is nominated, as I am informed, by the General; and I cannot say whether it will produce a competition, or what will be the issue thereof. This you may rely on: you have a preference in my mind, and will be proposed, unless there is the strongest probability of the inefficacy of such a measure."

To General Mifflin, President of Congress, Colonel Pickering wrote, on the 5th of March, 1784, that, tired of public offices, it had been his intention, so soon as he should have done with the office he then held, to continue the rest of his life a private citizen; but that a suggestion to him, that he might probably obtain the appointment of Secretary of War, had led to reflections on the duties of the office during peace, and his own situation and future prospects in private business; and

* Probably General Knox. See a letter of March 24th, 1785, from Knox to General Washington, in Sparks's "Correspondence of the American Revolution," Vol. IV. p. 98, and one from Washington to Knox, of June 18th, 1785, in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IX. p. 108.

neither of the latter appeared such as to relieve him from anxiety in regard to the support of his family and the education of his children. He was therefore solicitous to secure "a certain subsistence" in the War Office. He sets out his pretensions to the appointment, and says, if he should obtain it, he should consider the present office of Quartermaster-General as merged in the other, and manage the business of both offices for the pay annexed to the office of Secretary of War.

The election of a Secretary of War, however, was postponed until the next year.

In the beginning of April, 1784, Colonel Pickering removed his office from Newburgh to New York, where he expected it would continue some months.

The following correspondence between him and his relatives, the Rev. John Clarke and Dr. Joseph Orne, exhibits their views of some points in his character, and likewise their affectionate regard for him.

In a letter dated Boston, the 3d of March, 1784, Mr. Clarke wrote:—

"I have lost *my dear little son*. He died of a quinsy. My bosom still bleeds: Mrs. Clarke is inconsolable. Time, however, will effect the cure, which philosophy and religion often attempt in vain. But I need not wound your heart with those sorrows which pierce my own. I know the strength and ardor of your affection, and that you can easily feel for me on this very distressing occasion."

Colonel Pickering returned the following answer, dated New York, the 11th of April:—

"It is more than a month since a letter from Mr. Williams announced to me the sudden death of your child. Having left him in perfect health but a few days before, it was matter of surprise, as well as grief, to learn that he was no more.

Had I imagined that any topic of consolation could have been suggested by me, which had not previously occurred to your own mind, I should have written to you without delay. But I even doubt the efficacy of any such attempts. When the heart is deeply wounded, I believe that time alone can heal it. All the efforts of art, I suspect, serve only to retard its cure, or make it bleed afresh. My writing now, perhaps, will but renew your sorrow. There is, however, at some stages of it, a placid grief, which is rather soothing than painful. The heart is softened, and conscious tenderness gives us pleasure.

“Some time since I recollect meeting with a volume of Sir William Temple’s Works, and I chanced to read his letter to (I think) the Countess of Essex, on the death of her favorite son. I was charmed with it; but my mind, in respect to myself, was at ease. No son had been torn from *me*; and I will not pretend to judge, in such case, what must be the feelings of a parent’s heart. Yet, if you have not read that letter, I would recommend the perusal of it.” *

In the same letter he requests Mr. Clarke to send him “Dr. Chauncy’s work on the duration of future punishments, as soon as it arrives from London.”

Mr. Clarke wrote to him again on the 30th of August, 1784, as follows:—

“I am sorry to hear of the inflammation in your eyes. . . . You want them on many accounts. As a merchant, you cannot do without them. But, as a passionate admirer of female beauty, it would be happy for you if you had the hundred eyes of Argus.

“I am very glad you received the book.† It will afford you the highest entertainment when you are able to peruse

* See “The Works of Sir William Temple,” London, 1814, 8vo., Vol. III. p. 519.

† Dr. Chauncy’s treatise on “The Salvation of All Men.”

it. The criticisms are all just. And I think the arguments must convince all persons of ingenuity and candor. At least, it must excite them to examine the principles of their education, and to have abundant charity for persons of a different sentiment."

Dr. Orne, in a letter dated October 10th, 1784, says:—

"You are such a Proteus in character, that I do not know how to address you. Formerly I could always touch the very string I wished, and be in unison with you at a thousand miles distance. Under the semblance of a *Plough-jogger*, a *Military Citizen*, or a *Lover of Truth*,* I could always detect and prattle with my honest friend, whom the revolutions of time and the casualty of war have now removed out of my sight, and, what is worse, beyond my *knowledge*. However, as I always thought your heart as immutable as anything human, I will confidently go on as usual; and, notwithstanding the fictitious attributes which accidents have thrown round the man, I will appeal plainly to that interior spirit, which, I trust, is still simple and unchanged, as it was always void of decoration. The many vibrations you have made (now you must forgive my impudent speculation, but), your vibrations from music through law and arms, and thence to trade, make me suspect that you are not fixed yet. I do not believe you will die a merchant, for I think that your probity is not of the right sort to make you rich, since it is not merely professional and accommodating, as it ought to be for that purpose; and, as I firmly believe that you were made to stand at the head of one of your various professions, and supposing that the pendulum of your *vocations* has vibrated to one extreme, and is now on its return in a contrary direction, so I am persuaded that either music or law will bring you up, and that you will be for life either a singing-school master or

* Signatures of newspaper articles written by Colonel Pickering.

a judge; but, as singing masters and eunuchs are equal objects of my loathing, I cannot abide this as any part of the alternative, and my scheme obliges me to place your Honor on our Superior Bench, where God grant you may long flourish. If you should make one more aberration and wander up to the Ohio, won't this be called oscillating in a cycloid? I don't know; but this is certain,—that 'tis utterly beyond my plan, and demolishes more plausible speculations. It would, however, be a curious circumstance that a judge of the Superior Bench of the sovereign Commonwealth of Massachusetts should come within one of being a school-master; but not without its parallel, for the learned judge Sewall came within half a one . . . of being a minister at Beverly; which, in the day of it, of all human degradations on the clerical scale, would have been the vilest."

Congress having determined to put the treasury in commission, Dr. Holten, a member from Massachusetts, in a letter dated at Trenton, the 4th of December, 1784, inquired of Colonel Pickering whether it would be agreeable to him to be appointed one of the commissioners. In his answer, dated at Philadelphia, the 7th of December, Colonel Pickering desired to be made acquainted with the plan on which the Board was to be constituted before giving a decisive answer. He observed:—

"The duties of the Board may require other abilities than I possess, or may be incompatible with my present views and situation. You will permit me, Sir, to observe, that, after devoting my whole mature life to the public to my fortieth year, I deem it my duty to aim at some provision for my family when I leave it. I am attempting something in the commercial line; but I confess my prospects are not very flattering. I should, therefore, more readily listen to overtures for a public employment. But in this case the necessary style of living might consume at least my whole

salary. At the same time you will readily believe that my desires are confined within bounds of moderation.

“At present there remain various services to be performed in the Quartermaster’s department, which require some knowledge of the office; besides adjusting a multitude of outstanding debts. So long also as any troops are kept up, such services will be called for. To have them performed as to the directory part, without any expense to the public, I once proposed to the late President of Congress [Mifflin], that during peace the office of Quartermaster-General should be annexed to that of Secretary at War. At the same time, the duties of both offices were so familiar to me, I thought it would not be deemed officious that I offered myself as a candidate for that of Secretary at War, with the Quartermaster’s duties annexed. This office would be perfectly agreeable to me. It would afford me leisure to settle all accounts and demands in the Quartermaster’s department, and not absolutely exclude me from paying some attention to private business when it fell in my way. I am led to mention *private business* because I imagine the salary to be annexed to the office will not be considerable enough to maintain *even me*, with decency, in this expensive place, without the aid of private business.”

On the 11th of December, Dr. Holten replied, saying, that the powers of the Board were the same as those of the late Financier, but that the subject of alterations was before a committee of Congress. He added:—

“There is to be a Secretary at War appointed, and some of your friends here wish you to be in this department, and some, in the other. As to myself, I wish you to have that place which is most agreeable to you, knowing that the place you accept will be well filled. However, I have nominated you to the Board of Treasury, as I think it is not likely the two offices you mentioned will be joined, and I consider the Board of Treasury as being likely to be most profitable.”

Colonel Pickering wrote a second letter to Dr. Holten, dated at Philadelphia, the 26th of January, 1785, respecting the office of Commissioner of the Treasury, saying:—

“I learnt from your answer [to the first letter], that the powers of the Board had not been defined. One term will probably be an abjuration of all private business. Of this I was apprehensive, and Mr. Gerry’s information confirms it. But divers other reasons . . . had determined me to decline the office before I conversed with Mr. Gerry concerning it. I find also, by him, that the candidates are numerous; and I should be sorry to stand in the way of gentlemen better qualified for the station. . . . I am highly obliged by your attention to me, and beg your acceptance of my sincere thanks; but I also request you to withdraw your nomination of me to the office in question.

“There is another office to which I should have no objection, — that of Secretary at War. To this perhaps I have some pretensions, and this I should gratefully accept. . . . But even for this office I am not so solicitous but that I shall cheerfully acquiesce in the appointment of some other person, whose abilities and disposition will enable him to render to the public more valuable services than I can presume to promise.”

On the 8th of March, 1785, General Knox was chosen Secretary of War. On this subject General Gates wrote, on the 18th of May, 1785, to Colonel Pickering, “I most sincerely wished you to succeed to the War Office; but you have been an honest Quartermaster-General, and, of course, deserve to starve.” General Knox, however, for his important services in the Revolution, was equally entitled to the favorable regard of Congress.

An officer in the Quartermaster-General’s department, of whom Colonel Pickering entertained a very

favorable opinion, was Major Thomas Cogswell, Wagon-master-General: Colonel Pickering wrote to him on the 14th of January, 1784:—

“The great object of our warfare being accomplished, the army disbanded, and your services as Wagon-master-General to cease to-morrow, be pleased to accept my sincere thanks for the judicious and effectual assistance you have given at all times in the execution of your office, and your readiness to lend your aid in any services of my department. I wish you every success in your future life, and remain, with much esteem, dear Sir, your friend,” &c.

It appears that Major Cogswell, having a tender of the offices of a judge and a justice of the peace in “a new country,” manifested his confidence in Colonel Pickering by consulting him on the expediency of accepting them, and that Colonel Pickering gave him his views on the subject in a letter dated at Philadelphia, the 1st of February, 1785, as follows:—

“You ask my advice about a matter of which you, from a knowledge of circumstances, can form the best judgment. In new countries, as well as old ones, magistrates are necessary. A knowledge of the law is doubtless requisite to enable a gentleman to act as a judge or justice most acceptably to his fellow-citizens and to his own satisfaction. But in a new country an extensive or accurate knowledge of the law is not looked for; there is no object to induce gentlemen to acquire that knowledge. All therefore which can be expected is, that government will put in commission men of *integrity* and of *good understanding*. The latter I am sure you possess, and of the former your own consciousness will determine. Were I on the spot, I am pretty certain that I should advise you to accept of both offices. As you are disposed to read, you will very soon acquire more law knowledge than most of your brethren in office possess.

Purchase immediately Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England," Burn's "Justice of the Peace," and your own State laws.

. . . "But, however important is the knowledge of the law to a justice of the peace, there is one quality which I deem much more important, especially in the country; that is, a benevolent disposition, which shall induce him to compose differences among his neighbors, and discourage their going to law one with another. Such a magistrate is an honor and a blessing to his country; but a pragmatical fellow, who, like a pettifogging lawyer, encourages strifes among his neighbors, is one of the greatest mischiefs a country can be cursed with. I need not say you have a mind superior to such conduct. But the former character you will certainly aspire after: for that you will be held in honor; for that you will be revered as a magistrate, and be loved as a father."

Colonel Pickering's brother having written a letter informing him that their mother died on the 12th of December, 1784, intestate, and offering to pay him a small sum for his share of her effects if he consented, but, if not, asking what he would have done with the property, he replied, February 5th, 1785:—

"An aged person, with her infirmities, could not wish a continuance of life; and, when an aged Christian dies, the relatives cannot mourn. I am happy that my other relatives are well; especially that you are much better than you were last winter. . . . You need not have doubted my being perfectly satisfied with your allowance . . . for my share in our mother's effects. I know you are inviolably just, and am therefore always content with your determinations on our connected interests; and I trust we are both of so accommodating dispositions, that an umpire between us will never be called for."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Plan for Disposing of the Lands north-west of the Ohio. — Colonel Pickering's Views on the Subject. — His Objections to the proposed Ordinance of Congress concerning that Territory. — Letters from Mr. Rufus King and Colonel William Grayson. — Later Proceedings of Congress more in Accordance with Colonel Pickering's Views. — He is elected a Member of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture. — Declines being a Commissioner on the Claims of Virginia for defending Territory ceded to the United States. — His Administration of the Quartermaster-General's Department.

THE subject of disposing of the territory ceded by individual States to the United States being before Congress, then sitting at New York, Colonel Pickering wrote to Mr. Elbridge Gerry, a member from Massachusetts, as follows: —

“PHILADELPHIA, March 1st, 1785.

“As you have expressed your wishes to be concerned in the purchase of lands on the other side of the Alleghany Mountains, through our agency, we think it very material to your interest as well as our own, that we be informed, if possible, what plan Congress will probably adopt in disposing of those lands which lie north-west of the Ohio. If they mean to permit adventurers to make a scramble for them (as has been the case in this State and Virginia), it will behoove us to engage seasonably with some enterprising but confidential character, to explore the country and make locations. But I should rather suppose Congress would fall on a more regular plan, as that of surveying a district or districts for a State or States, dividing the same into counties and townships, and then selling these townships at public

auction ; the surveyors to be ordered to add to their surveys such explanations as would enable purchasers to judge of the value of the lands. The officers and soldiers of those States which have made no provision of lands for their troops, may perhaps have their district alike surveyed, and their several portions assigned to them by lot. I am aware these surveys would be expensive ; but this is an expense which must inevitably be borne, in whatever way the locations and divisions shall be made. If the surveys be made, as above proposed, by persons appointed by Congress, the expenses may nevertheless be charged to the purchasers or assignees, who are now obliged to bear the like expenses of locations, surveys, and patents in this State and Virginia. In this way the settlement of that country may be effected with regularity and with much more safety than in the desultory way practised in the States before mentioned, and with much greater advantage to the United States. If but a single State be sold on the other side of the Ohio, settlers will flock thither immediately. As soon as more lands shall be wanted, another adjoining State, surveyed into townships as before (and these townships, too, should be divided into lots), may be set up for sale ; and so in succession as lands are in demand.

“ All subsequent sales, in this way, would probably be increasing in their amount in proportion to the increase of settlers in the adjoining State or States. But, if adventurers should be permitted to ramble over that extensive country, and take up all the most valuable tracts, the best lands would be in a manner *given away* ; and the settlers thus dispersed it will be impossible to govern : they will soon excite the resentments of the natives, and bring on an Indian war, to the destruction of multitudes of the settlers, and to the injury of the public.

“ The ideas here suggested, I am sensible, are *rather foreign* to the interest of persons who would speculate in those lands ; but they appear to me adapted to promote the public interest, and therefore I shall be pleased if a plan

of the kind proposed be pursued. But if there must be a *scramble*, we have an equal right with others; and therefore the information desired in the beginning of this letter may be of essential importance. How soon do you expect to go to the eastward?

“Your answer to this letter will very much oblige your sincere friends, who wish to advance your interest with their own.”

Mr. Gerry enclosed to Colonel Pickering a draught of the ordinance* for disposing of the lands in the western territory, and, being about to return home, requested him to communicate his views to Mr. Rufus King, then a member of Congress from Massachusetts, to whom Mr. Gerry handed Colonel Pickering's letter. In consequence, Colonel Pickering wrote at much length to Mr. King, under date of March 8th, 1785, commenting on the proposed ordinance. He says:—

“The first paragraph orders the manner of dividing each new State [into *hundreds*]; but it seems to me it will be found impracticable. Each hundred is to be ten miles square, and each mile to consist of six thousand and eighty-six feet. Yet the lines making the eastern and western boundaries are to be true meridian lines; but meridian lines converge as you increase the latitude, and to such a degree, that, if you take any meridian, say at the thirty-ninth degree of latitude, and on that parallel set off ten geographical miles (equal to sixty thousand eight hundred and sixty feet) from such meridian, and then proceed northward to the forty-first degree of latitude, and there from the same meridian set off the like number of ten geographical miles, their extremity will be about eighteen hundred feet beyond the meridian of the like extremity at the parallel of thirty-nine degrees. I am aware that mathematical accuracy in

* In the Journals of Congress of May 28th, 1784.

actual surveys may not be expected ; but a difference of six hundred yards in ten miles must surely produce material errors."

This objection was disregarded by Congress ; for, by the ordinance of May 20th, 1785, it was determined that the territory should be divided into townships of six miles square, "by lines running due north and south, and others crossing these at right angles, as near as may be, unless," &c. The Act of Congress of the 10th of May, 1800, obviates the difficulty by providing for a survey of fractional sections.

Colonel Pickering offered some verbal amendments of the ordinance reported, and made several suggestions respecting the survey and sale of the lands. He observed, that, if they should be sold by auction, the United States, to prevent their selling too low, might bid once on every sale ; or might fix a minimum price per acre. He repeated his proposition, that the lands in one State should be first sold, and then, as a demand arose, those in another, and so on in succession. Although there were difficulties in the mode of sale suggested by him, he thought it would be more advantageous to the treasury, and cause extensive settlements to be made sooner, than if all the best lands were suffered to be picked up at a limited price all over that vast country, as they might be, on the plan proposed in the ordinance ; at least so far as the purchase from the Indians extended. He put the question, whether, instead of leaving each register to devise distinguishing marks for his land-warrants, as proposed, it would not be best, as a guard against counterfeits, to have the same devices for the whole ; and, in illustration, he added, "The Paymaster-General, in issuing his notes, intended, by having the blanks filled up by different

hands, to guard against forgeries; but in the event it facilitated the practice of counterfeiting." He intimated that it might be expedient for Congress to reserve salt-licks and salt-springs, with lots around them well wooded, for the supply of fuel for salt-works which might be erected; and to make proper regulations respecting them, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of persons who might neither manufacture salt themselves nor suffer others to do so, or of persons who would extort from the settlers exorbitant prices for an article so indispensable: and he said that perhaps coal and lead mines might deserve a like consideration.

He remarked further: —

"Water communication in that country will always be in the highest degree interesting to the inhabitants. It seems very necessary to secure the freedom of navigating the rivers to all the inhabitants of all the States. I hope we shall have no *Scheldts* in that country. To obviate this difficulty in part, a division of it into States by *natural boundaries* has been thought of; but this will make some of the States too large, and in many of them throw the extremes at such unequal distances from the centres of the governments as must prove extremely inconvenient. Whether the divisions agreed to by Congress the 23d of April last be the best possible, seems doubtful. They are certainly very unequal."

Since that day they have been much altered. The letter concludes thus: —

"There is one article in the report of the committee on which that act was made, which I am extremely sorry to see was omitted in the act. The committee proposed, that after the year 1800 there should be no slavery in the new States. I hardly have patience to write on a subject in which what is right is so obvious and so just, and what is

wrong is so derogatory to Americans above all men, so inhuman and iniquitous in itself. But I have no time to proceed without hazarding the loss of a conveyance by this post. I may use the freedom of another letter by the next, if time will permit."

Accordingly, in another letter of the same date, he resumed the subject. In this he states, that the holders of Virginia land-warrants, who did not go in person to make locations, had been obliged to give to adventurers, who undertook to explore the country and make locations for them, one quarter, one third, or perhaps more generally *one half*, of the lands, for their trouble, and had been exposed to impositions; that, on his plan, these exorbitant allowances will be done away with, and, every acre expressed in a warrant being secured to the purchaser, he will be disposed (as he can well afford) to give, on an average, one third more than if the locations were made in the other way; and that Congress may require the purchaser to pay fees at such rates as will eventually reimburse to the United States all the expenses of the surveys and sales.

He says further : —

"In looking over the Act of Congress of the 23d of April last, and the present report of an ordinance, relative to these lands, I observe there is no provision made for ministers of the gospel, nor even for schools and academies. The latter might have been brought into view; though, after the admission of *Slavery*, it was right to say nothing of *Christianity*. Yet so glaring an inconsistency would not have occasioned much surprise. It is easy to be inconsistent. Congress once made this important declaration, — 'that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*'; and these truths were held

to be *self-evident*. These great truths were echoed through the United States. Nevertheless, a proposition for preventing a violation of these truths in a country yet unsettled, and from which such violation might easily have been excluded, did not obtain! What pretence (argument there could be none) could be offered for its rejection? I should, indeed, have objected to the period proposed (the year 1800) for the exclusion of slavery; for the admission of it for a day or an hour ought to have been forbidden. It will be infinitely easier to prevent the evil at first, than to eradicate or check it in any future time. How would Congress wish the new States to be settled? By slaves or by freemen? Take any given period, — say fifty years: Will those States, in that time, have more acres of improved lands by the admission than by the exclusion of slaves? In respect to population and improvement, compare Pennsylvania with Maryland and Virginia, particularly the latter. The conclusion is obvious. But why do I expostulate with you, who already see all the reasons on this subject in points of view more striking than I can place them? Forgive me if my solicitude to prevent the greatest of evils has rendered me prolix. To suffer the continuance of slaves till they can gradually be emancipated, in States already overrun with them, may be pardonable, because unavoidable without hazarding greater evils; but to introduce them into countries where none now exist — countries which have been talked of, which we have boasted of, as asylums to the oppressed of the earth — can never be forgiven. For God's sake, then, let one more effort be made to prevent so terrible a calamity. The fundamental constitutions for those States are yet liable to alterations, and this is probably the only time when the evil can certainly be prevented. . . .

“I hope, Sir, you will find no cause to regret the trouble of reading my three long letters. The subject is of the first importance; and the hints I have thrown out, I flatter myself, will not be deemed uninteresting.”

To these letters Mr. King replied: —

“NEW YORK, 15th April, 1785.

“The best return in my power to make you for your ingenious communications on the mode of disposing of the western territory, is, to enclose for your examination the form of an ordinance reported to Congress on the subject.* You will find thereby, that your ideas have had weight with the committee who reported this ordinance; and I have only to add, that I shall hold myself particularly obliged by your further communications on this subject.

“I likewise enclose you the report of a committee on a motion for the exclusion of slavery from the new States. Your ideas on this unjustifiable practice are so just, that it would be impossible to differ from them.”

On the 19th of April, 1785, Colonel Pickering wrote to Mr. Hodgdon on the same subject, as follows:—

“Mr. King has sent me the last report [in Congress] about the western territory. I see a great and general conformity to my ideas suggested to him. I am still confident that plan is the most eligible for the public interest; and, if it be thrown aside, I should believe it to be done to give an opportunity for speculators (or rather land-jobbers) to make immense fortunes at the public expense.”

Colonel William Grayson, of Virginia, wrote a letter to Colonel Pickering, dated New York, April 27th, 1785, making a little addition to the history of the western territory, and showing a warm friendship for Colonel Pickering. He says:—

“Since my arrival I have been busily engaged in assisting about framing an ordinance for the disposal of the western territory. I think there has been as much said and wrote about it as would fill forty volumes; and yet we seem far

* Reported on the 14th of April by a committee of which Mr. King and Colonel Grayson were members.

from a conclusion: so difficult is it to form any system which will suit our complex government, and where the interests of the component parts are supposed to be so different. I made a motion . . . three days ago, which has nearly divided the Continent [meaning Congress] into equal moieties: the object of it was to double the quantity of surveying, and to sell the lands in townships and sections alternately.* This I did under the impression that it would accommodate both the Eastern and Southern States. However, this has been strongly objected to, and both sides adhere to their opinions; so that here we stick, without any movement either retrograde or progressive. I enclose you the draught of the ordinance as it stands, which you will be kind enough to keep in your hands in such a manner as to prevent it from being published, — this being against rule. I believe it will pass ultimately in a shape very like this. At least, none of the great principles, except, perhaps, the one alluded to, will be changed. By it you will observe, that there is no office created by it worth your acceptance. If, in the arrangement of the Post-Office, or any other matter, anything occurs which may be worth your notice, I will do myself the pleasure of informing you of it; and I can assure you, with great truth, it will give me real satisfaction to do everything in my power towards accomplishing any object which you may have in view.

“I am, with my compliments to the family, your affectionate friend,” &c.

The ordinance reported was adopted by Congress May 20th, 1785, modified, however, in the details; and alterations were subsequently made, April 21st, 1787, and July 9th, 1788. The ordinance of the 20th of May was silent on the subject of slavery; but, on the 16th of March preceding, Mr. King offered a proposition, that there

* This motion does not appear in the Journals of Congress; but a motion for the sale of the lands in the way suggested was afterwards made by Mr. McHenry, and adopted. See the Journals for May 4th, 5th, and 20th, 1785.

should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the States to be formed out of the territory above mentioned, otherwise than in punishment for crimes; "and that this regulation should be an article of compact, and remain a fundamental principle of the constitutions between" each of those States and the thirteen original States. It was voted that this proposition be committed; but I find no further notice of it until it makes its appearance in the celebrated ordinance of July 13th, 1787, "for the government of the territory of the United States north-west of the River Ohio." *

One section, numbered 16, in each township, was reserved for the maintenance of public schools; and this example has been followed generally, since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in the disposition of public lands, but no section has been reserved for religious or charitable uses. Salt-springs, with adjoining lands for the manufacture of salt, have sometimes been reserved from the general sales, subject to future disposition by Congress.

In 1785 Colonel Pickering was elected a member and Secretary of the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture. In a letter, dated Philadelphia, April 20th, to his brother, he says:—

"The founders are among the principal characters here. . . . The society, without my knowledge, elected me their secretary. On account of my business I wished to be excused; but they were urgent, and, as the chief of the writing (arising at its establishment) was already done, and the election was but for one year, I acquiesced. There may be honorary members residing in other States. If you have no objection, I will nominate you. . . . The society

* See the paragraph introductory to the perpetual articles, and the sixth of those articles, in the Journals of Congress for July 13th, 1787.

wish to promote a general attention to the subject of agriculture, and hope their institution will give rise to a similar one in each State."

An appointment of much importance to the public was proposed to Colonel Pickering in the following letter from Mr. Rufus King:—

"NEW YORK, May 8th, 1785.

"When Congress accepted the cession of western territory from Virginia, they engaged to reimburse Virginia the amount of her expenses in protecting the lands ceded during the late war.* A commissioner is to be appointed by Congress, another by Virginia, and a third by the two first, who, or a major part of whom, are to ascertain the sums to be reimbursed as aforesaid. If your engagements are such as would permit your acceptance of the appointment under Congress, it would give great satisfaction to a number of your friends, and remove an apprehension that at present obtains, that the United States are in danger of being charged with a very enormous sum to defray the expenses of General Clark's expedition to the Kaskaskies.

"It may require three months or more to execute the business. The salary is at the rate of fifteen hundred dollars the year, and authority [is given] to employ as many clerks as may be necessary at five hundred dollars the year. The pecuniary consideration, I am sensible, cannot be an inducement; but the opportunity of essentially serving the United States will be a powerful motive. If you can consistently accept this appointment, I should thank you to [let me] know it. I think Congress will know the interest of their constituents too well not to elect you if you can serve.

"The lands ordinance is not yet through. We have been obliged so far to give up the plan of townships as to admit the sale of one half of the townships in lots of a mile square.

* See Journals of Congress for October 10th, 1780, and April 13th, 1785.

“I will enclose you the ordinance so soon as it passes ; which I hope will be the case in two or three days.”

In answer, Colonel Pickering wrote, May 12th, that his engagements were incompatible with the service in question. Congress subsequently appointed General Samuel H. Parsons, and Virginia, Colonel Edward Carrington, their respective commissioners, and these two made choice of Colonel Pickering for the third ; but he wrote, on the 23d of September, to General Parsons : —

“To ascertain the sum due to Virginia for defending the western territory is of great moment to the United States, her demands being very great. It would, Sir, give me great pleasure to join you and Colonel Carrington in executing this business of your commission ; and I am sorry to decline it, because it will occasion delay : but it would so materially interfere with my own engagements, particularly in settling the accounts of my late department, that I cannot accept the appointment with which you have proposed to honor me.”

Colonel Carrington, having resigned, was succeeded by Colonel William Heth, of Virginia, who, on the 13th of February, 1786, wrote to Colonel Pickering as follows (after alluding to General Parsons) : —

“It is our mutual wish to appoint you the third commissioner, and, if you can be prevailed on to join us, I shall engage in the business with much more satisfaction than I can at present promise myself ; but, that you may see my sentiments in full on this head, and that you may judge of the kind of men with whom I wish to be concerned, I have handed you the enclosed [letter to General Parsons] with a flying seal. I will therefore only add, that I feel a pleasure in thus having an opportunity of assuring you that I am, dear Sir, with much affection and esteem, your friend,” &c.

Referring to Colonel Heth's proposal, General Parsons wrote, "To this I do most cordially agree, if you can consent to afford your assistance."

These urgent letters being unavailing, Colonel Carington, then a member of Congress, wrote to Colonel Pickering, April 16th, 1786, as follows:—

"In consequence of a request of Colonel Heth, my successor in the commission for western accounts, and with the consent of General Parsons, who is now here, I again try you upon the point of acting as a third person in that business. I am well assured that, upon the allowance hitherto held out by Congress, it could not be expected that any gentleman could afford to go from home upon it; but if you will go, provided an adequate allowance can be obtained, Congress must again be tried thereupon. Be good enough to write by the next post how far you may possibly be brought into the measure, that I may judge whether it will be worth while to make a trial; in which communication, I assure you, I will not conceive you in any terms to have so committed yourself as to be under an obligation to accept after the allowance is fixed upon."

Colonel Pickering persisted in declining the appointment.

He received a letter from Mr. King, dated New York, May 30th, 1785, stating that the question of abolishing the department of Quartermaster-General was before a committee of Congress, and inquiring what, if any, advantage would arise from keeping the department in existence. In the same letter Mr. King says:—

"I transmit you a copy of the land ordinance as it finally passed. All parties who have advocated particular modes of disposing of this western territory have relinquished some things they wished, and the ordinance is a compromise of opinions."

Colonel Pickering wrote on the 1st of June to Mr. King:—

“In respect to the Quartermaster’s department, I reply, that as soon as other provision shall be made for performing the few occasional duties required of it, it may be abolished. More than a year ago I proposed to some gentlemen that those duties should be given in charge to the Secretary at War. He may need an agent or agents, according to circumstances, to execute his orders. . . .

“You favored me with a draught of your motion for the exclusion of slavery on the other side of the Ohio. Did it prevail, or was avarice powerful enough to reject it?”

The office of Quartermaster-General was abolished on the 25th of July, 1785, Colonel Pickering having continued to hold it until that time.

In the “Life of General Greene,” edited by Mr. Simms, after a statement that Greene had placed the Quartermaster-General’s department “in very good condition, all things considered,” it is remarked:—

“His successor, though of unquestionable ability and integrity, was not so fortunate. The department suffered in his hands, and six months’ experiments were sufficient to satisfy the worst enemies of Greene, as well as his best friends, how much injury had been done to the country by the captious and cruel interference which had driven him from duties he was so peculiarly calculated to fulfil.*

Specific instances of short-coming on the part of Colonel Pickering are not pointed out in that volume, and I am not aware of the grounds on which his administration of the department is justly a subject of disparagement. Towards the close of the war (in

* See “The Life of Nathanael Greene,” edited by W. Gilmore Simms, p. 89.

December, 1782), as before mentioned,* the want of forage was complained of; but, in 1780, when General Greene was Quartermaster-General, there was a like deficiency: concerning which Marshall says, "The supplies for the forage department had failed; and a great proportion of the public horses had perished or been rendered unfit for use."† General Greene and Colonel Pickering have each the same justification for such a condition of affairs, namely, that he was not furnished by the government with the money required to purchase the necessary supplies. Under Colonel Pickering the scarcity of supplies would have been still greater than it was, had not Congress, at his suggestion and solicitation, enacted that the payments and the promises in his department should be made on a specie standard by means of his "specie certificates."

If, however, it be true that "the department suffered in his hands" (which is by no means conceded), let it be remembered, that General Greene relinquished it because, in his opinion, the performance of the duties, under the new arrangement, was a "physical impossibility;" ‡ that Colonel Pickering, nevertheless, undertook the management of the department, and, with slight variations in the compensation of his assistants, carried it into effect; that he was appointed "in the most critical and interesting season of the campaign," § and when the public treasury was empty; that the memorable march of the army, and the transportation of artillery and stores from the State of New York to Virginia, for the siege of Yorktown and capture of Cornwallis, was

* See page 390.

† Marshall's "Life of Washington," Vol. IV. p. 216.

‡ See his letters to Congress and to Washington, in Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. VIII. pp. 513, 515.

§ Ibid., p. 515.

successfully effected under his direction ; and that he was continued in the office of Quartermaster-General until long after the war of the Revolution was brought to a close. It is not to be doubted that Greene would have conducted the department under the new arrangement as well as any man could have done ; how much better than Colonel Pickering, must be a matter of opinion. With respect to the latter, I rest satisfied with the following remarks of Chief Justice Marshall. The last clause of the quotation is applicable equally to Colonel Pickering and to his predecessor.

“ Colonel Pickering, who succeeded General Greene, possessed in an eminent degree those qualities which fitted him to combat and subdue the difficulties of his department. To great energy of mind and body he added a long experience in the affairs of the Continent, with an ardent zeal for its interests ; and General Greene himself, and some of the former officers, at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, continued, for some time after their resignation, to render all the services in their power ; but there was an absolute defect of means, for which neither talents nor exertions could compensate.” *

Perhaps no one estimated Greene's talents more highly than Colonel Pickering. He regarded him as a sagacious statesman, and as the ablest general in the American Revolution.

As to the supposed injury to the United States occasioned by the change in the head of the Quartermaster's department, it is well known, and the fact is shown by the volume edited by Mr. Simms, that it was more than counterbalanced by Greene's eminent services in the Southern States ; services, too, which probably no other man in the country was competent to render.

* Marshall's "Life of Washington," Philadelphia, 1805, Vol. IV. p. 242.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Colonel Pickering desires to be appointed Treasurer of the United States. — Declines being a Commissioner to treat with the Indians. — Is a Member of the Society of the Cincinnati. — His Remarks on the Constitution of Phillips Academy at Andover, and on Education. — Noah Webster's Spelling-Book and Grammar. — Webster's Ingenuity, Learning, and Vanity. — Plan of Colonel Pickering for the Education of Boys; also for a Farm-School for Boys and Girls. — He would have the Poor taught gratis. — He purposes returning to Salem on a certain Event.

UPON information that Mr. Hillegas, the Treasurer of the United States, intended to resign, Colonel Pickering wrote to Mr. King, from Philadelphia, the 9th of June, 1785: —

“If such vacancy happen, I shall then be willing to stand a candidate to supply it, if there be a prospect of obtaining an election. But for this I do not mean to become a solicitor. If there be several candidates, let him who is equal to the duties of the office, and at the same time most deserving of the confidence of his country, be elected.”

Mr. King, in his answer, dated the 17th of June, says: —

“I do assure you that my duty could not be more faithfully discharged in the appointment of a successor to Mr. Hillegas than by aiding your election.”

On the 16th of June Colonel Pickering wrote, on the same subject, to Mr. Samuel Osgood, saying: —

“I have since considered of the connection that will subsist between the Treasury Board and the Treasurer; and

that you, as a member of that Board, would naturally wish for a Treasurer whom, while your judgment should approve, your friendship might embrace. If I have an interest in either, you will excuse the trouble of this letter. Its sole object is to authorize you to say I will serve, if elected : though this you will not say, unless you deem the public good connected with the appointment."

On the 19th, after the receipt of Mr. King's letter of the 17th, he wrote to him :—

"I beg leave to enclose a copy [of the letter to Mr. Osgood], in which you will see my motive for addressing him. The extent of the motive is, perhaps, not quite obvious. In directing the finances of these States, there will occur many points of equal difficulty and importance to resolve. Difficulties may arise particularly from the oppositions of interests of different States. In all cases of difficult determination, it was ever a relief to me if I could previously discuss the subjects with a confidential friend. If this friend were wiser than myself, so much the better ; if otherwise, yet the mere act of putting questions, if answered only by monosyllables, would tend to elucidate the subject. If I do not deceive myself, Mr. Osgood would repose a confidence in me as a friend, and, besides the common acts of society, would, in the view above suggested, derive some satisfaction from my appointment. This explanation could not have been given in my letter to Mr. Osgood ; and to you I make it *in perfect confidence*. For, while those who *know* me would know that it proceeded from a different source, yet others might place it to the account of vanity. We often form the truest judgments by changing situations. Were Mr. Osgood's and mine reversed, with eagerness I should seize the occasion which would give me a friend like him."

Mr. Osgood, writing to Colonel Pickering on the 26th of June, says :—

“Should a new choice take place, it would give me the sincerest pleasure if the appointment should fall upon you. Your past faithful services entitle you to much more than this appointment.”

The expected vacancy in the office, however, did not take place.

Mr. Wolcott having resigned his place as one of the commissioners for holding treaties with the Indians, Colonel Pickering, in July, was nominated in Congress to succeed him; but he declined being a candidate for the office.

The Society of the Cincinnati, formed by officers of the army on the termination of the war, was organized on the 13th of May, 1783. The mode by which it was to be perpetuated occasioned much clamor. On the decease of a member, he was to be succeeded by his eldest male descendant, or, in failure of such descendant, by a collateral relative who might be judged worthy of becoming a member of the Society. From this it was apprehended that the institution was creating an incipient order of hereditary nobility. Colonel Pickering did not regard it as threatening danger to the community; but he became a member with some reluctance on account of its insignificance compared with its lofty pretensions. One of the original articles of its constitution proposed “an incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.” At the first general meeting in Philadelphia, in May, 1784, a more modest constitution was drawn up, and was recommended to the State branches for adoption, in which the hereditary provision was omitted; and thereupon the public

dissatisfaction gradually subsided;* but a majority of the State branches did not agree to this change in the mode of admitting new members.† The Society has, nevertheless, proved harmless, showing that the outcry against it might well have been spared; and the benevolent distribution of its income among indigent officers and their families has been extremely useful. Colonel Pickering had many pleasant interviews with his friends at the annual meetings, in Boston, of the Massachusetts branch of the society. His diploma bears the date of October 31st, 1785; but the following remarks, made by him in 1823, in reference to a passage in Johnson's "Life of General Greene,"‡ indicate that he became a member of the Society at the time when it was organized.

"This institution is here noticed, and the idle alarm it created through the United States. I presume it originated with Knox, and that the draught of the project was his. It bore the marks of his pomposity, and assumed an importance — '*to preserve the rights and liberties of human nature*' — corresponding with his disposition.

"Nothing could more surprise me than the general alarm to which it gave rise; for I felt a solid objection to subscribe to the institution, because it assumed so much importance, when I saw it was really so insignificant. That a small number of officers, who, compared with the great body of their republican fellow-citizens, were but as a drop in the bucket, should arrogate to themselves the sublime duty of preserving the rights and liberties of human nature, — certainly by maintaining them in our own country, — when

* See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. IX. p. 500.

† See Thacher's "Military Journal of the American Revolution," p. 394; "North American Review" for October, 1853; and "New American Cyclopædia," art. *Cincinnati*.

‡ Vol. II. p. 409.

they were the common and interesting care of all our fellow-citizens! I did, however, subscribe to the institution, but absolutely and purely to avoid the reproach of *singularity*; for I supposed *all* the officers of the army would become members of the society."

Mr. Samuel Phillips, Jr., has already been mentioned as a friend who generously and patriotically encouraged Colonel Pickering, in the beginning of the Revolution, in the publication of his "Plan of Discipline for a Militia."* The same liberal spirit, but on a larger scale, was exerted by him, in conjunction with Mr. John Phillips, in 1778, in founding Phillips Academy at Andover; and some letters passed between him and Colonel Pickering in relation to the statutes of the Academy.

Mr. Phillips wrote the following letter, dated at Boston, the 6th of May, 1785:—

"I might make many apologies for so long delaying to comply with your request respecting the constitution of the Academy with which I am connected. . . . I have now sent you a copy of the whole instrument (bounds of land and sums of money excepted), for *your* inspection, wishing to communicate such parts only as may be of service. My main object in being so particular was, that you might have the fullest view of the design, and that I might, with more propriety, ask the favor of his remarks whose counsel and aid as a trustee I much relied on, had we been so fortunate as to have had his residence in the State. The general plan I still think good; and, although difficult to be executed, I do not despair. The composition in some parts I wish to have altered, and propose making a new draught before the next trustee meeting, which will be early in July: if, before that time, you can find it conven-

* See page 86.

ient to favor me with such thoughts as shall occur, both as to form and substance, you will much oblige your sincere friend."

In his answer, dated Philadelphia, May 29th, Colonel Pickering said:—

"Your obliging letter of the 6th, enclosing a copy of the Constitution of the Academy at Andover, was handed me last evening by Mr. Parsons. I have not since found time to consider it in such a manner as would be requisite to comply with your request. I will endeavor to do it within the limited time; though I can hardly flatter myself with being able to make any communications of consequence enough to merit your attention.

"I am charmed with the leading thought in the institution, — that the master's attention to the *morals* and *dispositions* of the youth is to *exceed every other care*. But there is one article which I should wish to see materially altered. And this alteration would, in my view, render it more conformable to 'the first and *principal* object of this institution, — the *promotion* of true *piety* and *virtue*.' The article I refer to defines the *fundamental principles* of the Christian religion. Now, as Christians, and *serious* and *enlightened* Christians, have never yet been able to agree on what should be deemed the fundamental principles of their religion, I really wish it had not been attempted to define them in laying the foundation of this institution.* To instance in one point: All Christians believe in the existence of One True God; but multitudes of devout and well-informed Christians cannot admit of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, because it is a doctrine not merely beyond their reason, but inconsistent with their ideas of possible existence, and a doctrine which *they* do not find in the words of Christ or his Apostles. I am sure the institution originated

* The statutes of the founders specify the prominent doctrines of Calvinism, and make it the duty of the master to inculcate them upon the students.

in benevolent motives, and that it was intended to be a liberal one; yet the position above mentioned (to say nothing of some others) greatly narrows its foundation. If it be practicable now to alter the article in question, the hint here given will be sufficient; if no alteration can be admitted, I rest satisfied in your discernment and charity for the continuance of your good opinion, any difference of sentiment on controverted points notwithstanding.

“I may resume the consideration of this article in a future letter: at present, I have only time to add, that I am, with the truest respect and esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.”

In a second letter to Mr. Phillips, dated June 18th, he says:—

“On the 29th ultimo I acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 6th of that month, and made, in haste, a few observations on that part of the plan of your Academy which describes the principles of religion in which the scholars shall be instructed; expressing my opinion, that it were better to leave the articles of religion undefined. This opinion seems to be warranted by the Constitution itself; for, in stating the qualifications of the principal instructor, it is only required that he be a *Protestant professor of the Christian religion*, and of *exemplary manners*. And what more would you demand or wish for in the pupils committed to his charge? Establishments in matters of religion or government once made, and confirmed by the practice of some years, it is in the highest degree difficult to alter, whatever errors, absurdities, or follies may, in the progress of mankind in knowledge, be discovered. The Liturgy and Service of the Church of England are a familiar instance of the former, and every government in the world of the latter. Even the recent Constitution of Pennsylvania, though palpably defective in the formation of its legislature,* yet,

* Then consisting of only one body.

after seven years' confirmation, appeared to be unalterable. The most enlightened members of the State repeatedly endeavored to bring the Constitution under a review, in order to supply that and other defects; but in vain. Nothing but the flagrant evils which may result from these defects, and be sensibly felt by the people, will ever effect a change: such, at least, are my fears. And I am apprehensive that the provision made in different Constitutions of these States for revising and altering them at regular periods — a provision so wise and pleasing in theory — will too seldom be realized.

“It is submitted to the discretion of the trustees, at some future period, to erect a large building for the accommodation of at least fifty scholars with boarding, besides the master and his family. I have heard colleges compared to monasteries, as tending to produce, in a degree, the vices of monks. Be this as it may in respect to *youth* in the strictest sense of the word, it seems evidently inexpedient to throw *children* together in such numbers. So many as would compose an ordinary family would be enough to commit to the care of one couple, the heads of a private family. I say *couple*, because I would never place children to board but in the houses of married people, or of those who had been married, and of choice with those who were or had been parents.

“The plan in general appears to be so well digested, that I should not have hazarded any remarks upon it, if you had not requested them; much less should I have noticed any defects in the composition. But, as you suggested such defects by your proposed amendments, I read the plan with some attention to that particular. The remarks on the composition you will find in the enclosed paper.

“I observe that the trustees, at their annual meeting, are to examine into the proficiency of the scholars. Is it not also expedient to provide for a *quarterly* examination? But what avail examinations, if conducted in the usual way? I mean, by previously instructing the scholars in those *par-*

ticular lessons to which the examinations are to be confined. If we would know what progress a boy has made in a dead or foreign language, does not common sense obviously show that his books should be opened at the discretion of the examiner, and the boy there set to construe and to parse? If we would discover his knowledge in geography, shall we hear him repeat certain articles which he has purposely been directed to commit to his memory? Or shall we not rather ask the solution of any problem, or description of any country, taken at discretion? . . .

“What ought a *Commencement* to be? A real representation of the abilities and knowledge of the youth proposed to be graduated. What is a *Commencement*? A *farce*. Is it not a prostitution of the honors of a university to bestow degrees on scholars who cannot stand an examination in its prescribed course of education? . . . Is this evil past a cure? Is it impracticable to make a better provision for the *tutors* at Cambridge? Cannot the tuition money be so increased, as, with the salaries granted by government, to enable the tutors to marry and support families? And if such provision were made, are there any so opposed to nature, to reason, and to religion, as to ‘forbid to marry’? When, by such an early provision, the best instructors might be procured and retained, shall the provision actually made be capable of *permanently* retaining only the worst? The modes of education in our schools and universities, especially the latter, are greatly defective. A reform is evidently to be wished for. In this I know not whose exertions in Massachusetts would be more effectual than yours; and to you I wish the honor, and to society the happiness, which such effectual exertions cannot fail to produce.”

Colonel Pickering proposed a few verbal alterations, by which the phraseology of the Constitution of the academy would have been improved: no change, however, was made, either in form or substance, in consequence of his suggestions.

Having several sons, he felt deeply interested in the subject of education ; and, in October, 1785, he began a correspondence with Mr. Noah Webster, to whom he was at that time a stranger. He tells him that he is so well pleased with his Spelling-Book and Grammar (the first and second parts of his "Grammatical Institute"), that he wishes to have them introduced universally into our schools, being convinced of their superiority to any other used in America, but that he has failed in an attempt to have them adopted in the Episcopal academy in Philadelphia, the trustees, he was informed, being fearful of injuring the academy if they should introduce a spelling-book with which the people were totally unacquainted. He believes no one of them had taken the pains to examine the "Institute." The practical character of his mind is shown, in a small but not unimportant matter, in his remarks to Mr. Webster. He suggests the expediency of printing the Spelling-Book in two parts. He says :—

"The master of one of my children was so obliging as to let him use your Spelling-Book ; but before he had learnt his letters and a dozen of the tables, the book was worn out. It is true he was a careless boy ; but there are many such boys. I therefore earnestly wish you to think of such a division. The key for pronouncing the vowels, arranged in the clearest order, and fully explained — the alphabet — the double letters — and about half a dozen tables of words most proper for children to begin with, perhaps would be enough for their primer. These would be comprehended in a few leaves ; but the leaves should be of thick strong paper, and of a tolerable fineness, to take a fair impression from a large and good type. That called [pica?] appears to me most suitable ; for the letters ought to be perfectly fair and accurate, to enable a child to dis-

tinguish them. The utility of such a primer will be obvious ; but I have this further view in requesting you to undertake it. In the first place, the pronunciation and spelling will be formed on true principles. In the next, as nothing of the kind is extant, there will be no Dilworth, or any other imperfect spelling-book, to interfere with it ; and, being comprised in a few leaves, its cheapness will recommend it to parents. Then, your principles and plan being once adopted in the primer, I think the introduction of your whole 'Institute' will follow of course."

Mr. Webster replied from Baltimore, October 28th:—

"I have just had the satisfaction of receiving your favor of the 19th current, and acknowledge myself honored by your attention to my publications. I have ever been a little surprised that the 'Institute' found little or no sale in Philadelphia, the first city in America, when it is generally received in the Northern States, in New York, and in Charleston, South Carolina. I must impute it to inattention.

"Your idea of dividing the first part strikes me favorably, and it is probable will have its effect. The edition you have seen is the second ; the third and the fourth are printed on larger types, — *pica*, — which is probably the type you left a blank for in yours. . . .

"I have begun a reformation in the language, and my plan is yet but in embryo. . . .

"On my return I shall make some stay in Philadelphia, and probably shall read my Lectures in that city. As I am the first American who has entered on such important plans, and a youth, as well as a Yankee, I shall need the countenance of gentlemen of your established character.

"In order to prepare the minds of people for such an event, I could wish that a paragraph may be inserted in a Philadelphia paper, informing, that I may be expected to read a course of Lectures on the English language some time this winter."

From letters of Mr. Webster and memoranda of Colonel Pickering, it appears that the latter examined the first part of the 'Institute' very carefully, and noted minutely inaccuracies, omissions, and instances of spelling and pronunciation in which he differed from Mr. Webster, and that Mr. Webster acquiesced in the justness of many of his criticisms.

In a letter of April 28th, 1786, to some person in New York, he sketches a plan of education for boys until they arrive at the age of fifteen years, varied according as they design to enter a college, or to become merchants, masters of vessels, mechanics, or farmers. Although superseded now, perhaps, in the progress of society, the following testimonials tend to show that it was an improvement on the systems of education then prevalent. Mr. Webster, in a letter of May 21st, 1786, said :—

"I am in haste, and can only observe, that the mode of education you have described is generally agreeable to my ideas. I wish it might be adopted in all our commercial towns, and shall use my influence for this purpose."

The Rev. John Clarke, of Boston, wrote, June 9th :—

"I admire your system of education. I have shown it to several gentlemen of superior judgment: they also admire it; and, with some additions, they request it may appear in print. To say the least, you have furnished an excellent groundwork for a treatise upon that subject."

Colonel Pickering also, probably about the same time, drew up, at much length, a "plan for establishing schools in a new country, where the inhabitants are thinly settled and the children are to be educated with a special reference to a *country life*." His plan proposes

that three or four hundred acres of land, consisting of meadow, tillage, and wood land, in convenient proportions, should be appropriated for the use of a school, and that "both boys and girls should be taught to read, write, and cipher. The boys should also be instructed in every useful branch of husbandry and gardening, and the girls in every kind of work necessary for farmers' wives to know and practise."

Nor was he unmindful of the cause of education when he was a member of the Pennsylvania Convention in 1789, 1790, for revising the Constitution of that State. The following proposition being before the convention, to wit, "A school or schools shall be established in each county for the instruction of youth, and the State shall pay to the masters such salaries as shall enable them to teach at low prices," Chief Justice McKean moved an amendment by adding the words "and the poor *gratis*." Colonel Pickering introduced as a substitute for the whole, "The legislature shall provide, by law, for the establishment of schools throughout the State, in such manner that the poor may be taught *gratis*." This clause, amended by inserting after *legislature*, the words "*as soon as conveniently may be*," was adopted by the Convention and ratified by the people as a part of the Constitution.*

Having been informed that his brother was in the last stages of consumption, Colonel Pickering wrote him

* See "Minutes of the Convention," &c., 21, 44, 140, 144; and "Minutes of the Grand Committee of the Whole Convention," &c., 75. The merit of introducing the provision that the poor should be taught gratis, has been ascribed to Colonel Pickering; and, as he was familiar with the fact that they were so taught in Massachusetts, it is not unlikely that he suggested it, either in debate or in conversation; but, according to the official statement in the text, the honor of formally proposing it to the Convention is due to Mr. McKean. Colonel Pickering concurred with him, only substituting a better form of expression.

estate for my children, in case the failure of commercial business should render it necessary. But to return to Salem will be much more agreeable, provided I can there obtain a competency.

“The disposition my brother has made of his estate is perfectly agreeable to me; and, if he had thought proper to order it in any other manner, still I should have been content.* If I return, I suppose the farm may continue entire, on my allowing a suitable rent to each proprietor. I have considered of the management of it, and am inclined to think it practicable to pay sufficient attention to it, although I should hold the offices enjoyed by my brother. To obtain these offices will be a matter of considerable consequence. You mentioned Mr. Phillips’s † wish to know my intention. I shall now be much obliged to him and my other friends for their assistance in procuring me the Register’s office and a seat on the bench of the inferior court, should they become vacant.”

Writing the next day to Mr. John Gardner, his nephew, and referring to the probable decease of his brother, he says:—

“This circumstance will induce me to return to Salem, where I expect to spend the remainder of my days, provided I obtain the same offices your uncle now holds, and which formerly were held by me.”

In furtherance of his design, he prepared a circular letter to the Selectmen of the several towns in the county of Essex, to be communicated to the electors in case his brother should die, saying that he resigned the office of Register of Deeds when called to the field, and that, prompted by the wish to return to Salem and

* Colonel Pickering’s brother owned a valuable farm within the township of Salem, and he had probably made a will devising portions of it to his sisters, or some of them, and to Colonel Pickering, in severalty.

† Samuel Phillips, Jr., of Andover.

dwell among his friends, he desired to be reinstated in that office. His intention of returning to Salem was relinquished in consequence of an improvement taking place in the health of his brother, who was reëlected.

Had the illness of his brother terminated in death, it would probably have changed materially the current of Colonel Pickering's life. He would have returned to Salem, and probably have been reinstated in the offices of Register of Deeds and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the county of Essex, in which case he and his family would have escaped the distresses hereafter mentioned, occasioned by his removal to Wyoming. On the division of the people of the United States into two great parties after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, he would doubtless have been a decided Federalist; and this, in conjunction with his reputation and his exactness in the business of the office, might perhaps have assured his reëlection as Register of Deeds for several years; but it is not improbable that President Washington would have selected him for some employment under the general government.

In the winter and spring of 1785 and 1786, Mr. Noah Webster delivered his course of lectures on the English language in Philadelphia, New York, and other places, as well as in Baltimore. From the following passage in a letter of Colonel Pickering to Mr. John Gardner, his nephew, it appears that he could do justice to Mr. Webster's merits, although displeased by his vanity and egotism:—

“PHILADELPHIA, July 4th, 1786.

“With respect to Mr. Webster, you must have noticed, that, with a competent share of good sense, he possessed a *quantum sufficit* of vanity, so that he really overrated his

own talents. He imagined that he was a good reader, but I had so much *friendship* for him as to point out his defects; and, though it was evidently a little mortifying, he thanked me then, and has since made his acknowledgments by letter. He was particularly defective in reading *poetry*; and this, perhaps, as much as anything, disgusted his audience. In truth, there was so much of egotism, especially for a young man, apparent in his communications, as to prevent his hearers receiving the satisfaction which might otherwise have been derived from many ingenious observations. For my own part, I esteem him for his ingenuity, learning, and industry. The object of his pursuit is an important one, and divers of his lectures received the *private* approbation of several of the most discerning and critical hearers. Dr. Shippen told me that his *son* attended one evening, and was very much *disgusted*; but added, that his son had not given him a *fair chance*. The Doctor himself, one evening particularly, expressed himself to me in terms of very sensible pleasure, and acknowledgment of Webster's spirit and ingenuity. I have taken the liberty, in a letter since his departure, to tell him that *diffidence* in a public lecturer, especially in a young man, was essential to the art of pleasing. As to the encouragement he met with, I do not think it was to be boasted of; at the same time, bating the truly displeasing marks of vanity, I think the encouragement received was less than he deserved. But *Philadelphians* have ever appeared to me to have an overweening opinion of their own literary acquirements, as well as other excellences. Some time ago, Dr. Ewing, in recommending for the college at New York a mathematician who had been in a subordinate station at the University here, to complete his eulogium, added, 'He was sure he would have no equal eastward of the Hudson.' Mr. Webster has repeated his lectures at New York, and, he wrote me, to an audience about as numerous as that at Philadelphia. He said that Dr. Ramsay and other members of Congress approved and patronized his design, and his execution of

it thus far, and encouraged him to go on ; particularly to attempt a reform of the English alphabet, so as to give a distinct character to every distinct sound, and to let no one sound be signified by more than one character. This would introduce some new letters and expunge several of the old ones. Dr. Franklin wrote a paper, some years ago, on this subject, which he showed to Mr. Webster. By the way, the Doctor treated Mr. Webster with respect, and expressed himself thus on his ‘Sketches of American Politics’ (a pamphlet written by Mr. Webster with that title), — that it was very well written. This remark regarded that part of the pamphlet which, in a forcible manner, pointed out the necessity of altering the Federal government, and enlarging the powers of Congress. Mr. Webster has since written to the Doctor, submitting to his censure a plan for reforming the alphabet, and requesting the Doctor’s permission of dedicating to him his lectures, which he intends shortly to publish.

“I believe you did not hear Mr. Webster’s lectures. Among other things, he showed the glaringly improper pronunciation of many words in all the States ; but there seemed to be fewer in New England than elsewhere. . . . The lectures were, I believe, never intended as a catchpenny scheme ; but they served to explain and recommend the principles on which his ‘Grammatical Institute’ was founded.”

APPENDIX.

No. I. (pp. 77, 82.)

BATTLE OF LEXINGTON.

THE imputation or insinuation of pusillanimity or dilatoriness on the part of Colonel Pickering, in regard to the battle of Lexington, appears in several historical works. Gordon, in his "History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America," * says, "Colonel Pickering, of Salem, had the command of a fine provincial regiment. Had he pushed on with his men, so as to have headed the British before they had gained Charlestown Neck (and he was near enough), they must have clubbed their firelocks, for they were quite wearied out with the services of the day, and had but a round or two of ammunition remaining. No satisfactory reason has been assigned for the want of greater alertness in Colonel Pickering's regiment."

In Mrs. Mercy Warren's "History of the American Revolution," † it is said, "Had the militia of Salem and Marblehead have come on, as it was thought they might have done, they would undoubtedly have prevented this routed, disappointed army from reaching the advantageous post of Charlestown. But the tardiness of Colonel Pickering, who commanded the Salem regiment, gave them an opportunity to make good their retreat. Whether Mr. Pickering's delay was owing to timidity, or to a predilection in favor of Britain, remains uncertain; however it was, censure at the time fell very heavily on his character."

General Heath's "Memoirs" contains the following passage: ‡
"The militia contigued to hang on the rear of the British, until they reached Bunker's Hill, in Charlestown; and it had become so dusk, as to render the flashes of the muskets very visible. At this instant an officer on horseback came up from the Medford road, and in-

* Vol. I. p. 484.

† Vol. I. p. 187.

‡ Page 14.

quired the circumstances of the enemy; adding, that about seven hundred men were close behind, on their way from Salem to join the militia. Had these arrived a few minutes sooner, the left flank of the British must have been greatly exposed, and suffered considerably; perhaps their retreat would have been cut off. As soon as the British gained Bunker's Hill, they immediately formed in a line opposite to the Neck; when our General [Heath] judged it expedient to order the militia, who were now at the Common, to halt and give over the pursuit, as any further attempt upon the enemy, in that position, would have been fruitless."

Colonel Pickering's regiment was composed of the militia of Salem, Beverly, Danvers, Middleton, and Lynn. The foregoing extracts seem to suppose the whole regiment to have been with him; whereas the Salem "Memorial"* puts it beyond controversy, that he was accompanied by only the Salem companies, four in number, mustering, on this occasion, "near three hundred men."† Considering the uniform and prominent opposition of Colonel Pickering to the arbitrary measures of the British government from the year 1770, and perhaps from an earlier date, and his military services in the regular army during the Revolution, besides his twice coming forward as a volunteer in the early part of the contest on a call for militia, the accusation of timidity, or of a predilection in favor of Britain, is absurd. That his character did not suffer contemporary injury, with those best acquainted with it, is proved by the facts, that, besides the important offices conferred upon him, as mentioned in his letter to Jacob Dodge,‡ his name stood first, in October, 1775, on the Committee of Safety chosen by his townsmen; that, on an election of Register of Deeds, in the beginning of 1776, by the inhabitants of his own county, "all the votes were for him"; that in July, 1776, by a resolve of the General Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, the company of sea-coast men and the company of matrosses stationed at Salem were put under his order and direction; and that in May, 1777, Washington appointed him Adjutant-General of the army of the United States.

* See before, page 74.

† General Heath's mistake as to the number may have arisen from the fact, that in December, 1776, Colonel Pickering took the command of a new regiment of seven hundred men, furnished from the whole county of Essex, for three months' service, which marched into the State of New York, and there became subject to the orders of General Heath, as before related.

‡ See page 78.

In Frothingham's "History of the Siege of Boston," * &c., it is said, . . . "While Colonel Pickering, with the Essex militia, seven hundred strong, threatened to cut off their retreat to Charlestown." The author cites as an authority a letter of Washington, dated May 31st, 1775, in which he says, "If the retreat had not been as precipitate as it was, — and God knows it could not well have been more so, — the ministerial troops must have surrendered or been totally cut off; for they had not arrived in Charlestown (under cover of their ships) half an hour, before a powerful body of men from Marblehead and Salem was at their heels, and must, if they had happened to be up one hour sooner, inevitably have intercepted their retreat to Charlestown." †

The erroneous number "seven hundred" seems to have been adopted by Frothingham from Heath's "Memoirs." The statement of Washington has the appearance of being made on his own knowledge of facts, and derives importance from the weight of his character. But, on turning to the letter in Sparks, it is seen that it was written at Philadelphia, and that the paragraph from which the quotation is taken begins, "From the *best accounts* I have been able to collect of that affair, indeed from every one, I believe the fact, stripped of all coloring, to be plainly this, — that if the retreat," &c. (as above). These accounts probably exaggerated the force from Salem, and in regard to Marblehead were certainly incorrect. The militia of this town did not begin their march, on the 19th of April, until ten o'clock at night; ‡ before which hour the British troops were safe in their position on Bunker's Hill.

In a more recent publication is the following passage: Had the retreat of the British troops "been delayed a half hour longer, or had Pickering, with his fine regiment from Salem and Marblehead, been alert enough to have intercepted them in front, it was thought that, worn down as they were by fatigue, and exhausted of ammu-

* Page 78.

† See Sparks's "Writings of Washington," Vol. II. p. 407.

‡ See a statement on the authority of Captain Russell Trevett, who commanded the Marblehead militia on the occasion, in the "North American" (a newspaper published at Baltimore) of April 13th, 1808. It is there said, that, in consequence of there being two ships of war (the *Lively*, of twenty guns, and another ship, of sixteen) in the harbor of Marblehead, and of the absence of many of the inhabitants on fishing voyages, the Selectmen and the Committee of Safety determined that the minute-men should not depart till ten o'clock at night, when they should proceed without noise; and that this was done accordingly.

nition, they must have surrendered." * As has already been stated, Colonel Pickering's force consisted, not of his whole regiment, but of the four Salem companies alone; and the militia of Marblehead did not belong to his regiment.

It is remarkable, that the most authentic and trustworthy document relative to the Salem militia in connection with the battle of Lexington, — the contemporary "Memorial" of Salem, — seems to have escaped the notice of every one of these historians. It was *in print*† before the publication of Frothingham's work and of the seventh volume of Bancroft.

I subjoin other statements concerning the battle of Lexington, giving, as I believe, a more correct view of Colonel Pickering's conduct in reference to that event, than is contained in the Histories above quoted.

Major Joseph Hiller, an officer in one of the Salem companies in 1775, and subsequently the collector of the ports of Salem and Beverly, wrote the following interesting letter to my brother, the late John Pickering: —

"LANCASTER, March 13th, 1809.

"SIR,

"The desire you intimated, when I lately saw you, to know any circumstances I could inform you of respecting the events which took place in Salem on the 19th of April, 1775, has engaged my attention, and the following observations are the result. Being unable to find in my possession any private memorandums relating particularly to the subject, few opportunities having occurred to converse with contemporaries upon it, and thirty-four years, singularly marked with events, having elapsed, little or nothing interesting is left within my recollection to communicate, which you have not already obtained from the best sources.

"The calamities and apprehensions which prevailed throughout the American Provinces previous to that period, and the patriotic virtues they brought into action, must be familiar to you, and that in the display of these latter Salem was behind none.

"In every well-regulated community there are generally some prominent characters whose discretion, activity, and firmness are resorted to on all momentous occasions. Such characters that town could then boast. I need not tell you who was eminent amongst the

* Bancroft's "History of the United States," Vol. VII. p. 309.

† See Force's "American Archives," 4th Series, Vol. III. column 337.

eminent ; the various places where Colonel Pickering stood may for ever tell with pride who occupied them.

“ The march of the British troops, under Colonel Leslie, into the town of Salem, the last of February, 1775, and the attendant circumstances, had increased the apprehensions of the people, and a general expectation of an eruption somewhere was manifest ; nevertheless, the alarm which shook the town on the morning of the 19th of April, that the British troops had marched out of Boston and had attacked our people at Lexington, lost none of its force. The sensations it excited are beyond my powers of description. The report was vague, but its probability was believed. The people collected in various parts of the town, and concentrated in Court Street. Colonel Pickering was upon the ground ; his usual energies were put into action. After a short consultation with the Selectmen, Committee of Safety, and other gentlemen was held, the several militia companies were embodied and equipped with a rapidity correspondent to the occasion, and soon after marched, in hopes to receive some direct information on their route. The companies halted a short time in Danvers, — I think near the confluence of the roads ; but, no intelligence being obtained, they resumed their march with increased rapidity, which, with trifling interruption, was uniformly continued till they arrived at Medford, and from thence to Winter Hill ; and, in this last part of the march more especially, a serious expectation of actual engagement and a solemn determination to act with firmness, so far as I could judge from what I heard and saw, was generally manifest ; but, when we arrived at the summit of the hill, we saw we were too late : the British troops had gained the opposite hills, and were fast collecting in force. It was naturally a subject of regret, that we had not been able to arrive sooner ; but from no circumstance which I was ever acquainted with did I ever think, that blame could attach, either to the officer or those under his command, for this event. Attempts of this kind, however, have been made ; but I believe they have universally failed of effect with every impartial and fair mind, and that those who have obtained correct information upon the subject have been satisfied that it was only a subject of regret as an event that could not be controlled. It has, nevertheless, been fashioned into a weapon by party malice, and occasionally brandished, for the vilest purposes, against the inflexible patriot whose life has been devoted to the best interests of his country ; but those who know Colonel Pickering know that these and similar efforts cannot affect him, and that their buzz can excite only his pity or contempt.

"I have given you evidence, Sir, that I could communicate nothing new to you upon the subject of your inquiry; and my only apology for writing upon it is the respect I owed to your request.

"I am, Sir, with great regard, yours,

"JOS. HILLER."

In a memorandum, dated April 13th, 1811, given to my brother John Pickering, and labelled, in his handwriting, "Captain Jos. White's observation at Essex Bank as to T. Pickering's conduct April 19, 1775," Mr. White is represented as saying, "he did not like Colonel Pickering, as he considered him a man who delighted in controversy, &c.; but said, that before the Revolution he was a very active and useful man in public affairs, — no man more so; and, as to the Lexington affair, he ought not to be blamed for that, for he did all that a man could do, all that was in his power to do (or words to that effect), — and added, '*This* I can say from my own knowledge.'" Mr. White was the elderly gentleman who was murdered at Salem in 1830. He is entitled to credit for manliness and candor; for, at the period of his remarks, the Democratic party, to which he belonged, was much incensed against Colonel Pickering.

Having expressed to my friend, Mr. John C. Gray, a wish that he would put on paper his recollections of what his father, the late William Gray, an eminent merchant, and at one time Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, had said on this subject, he wrote to me, under date of August 24th, 1858, as follows: —

"In reply to your request, I have to say, that my father, as has been more than once stated in the public prints, marched from Salem under your father's command on the 19th of April, 1775. It is well known that the Salem troops did not arrive in time to take part in the memorable conflict of that day. I recollect distinctly, that I once inquired of my father whether this failure to arrive was owing to any want of due exertion on the part of the troops or their commander, and that his answer was decidedly in the negative. . . . The conversation to which I refer was held, I think, about the time of our last war with England. I have always inferred from it, as well as from other conversations with my father in relation to the events of that day, that Colonel Pickering and every man under his command exerted themselves to the utmost to come within reach of the enemy."

No. II. (p. 156.)

BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE.

Two newspapers, published in Boston, namely, the "Continental Journal," of November 6th, 1777, and the "Boston Gazette," of November 10th, (and doubtless newspapers published elsewhere in the United States,) contain the following statement, but without any voucher for its authenticity:—

"State and Disposition of the British Forces at the Battle of Brandywine, September 11, 1777, at the Upper Ford, under Lieutenant-General Lord Cornwallis:—

		Killed and wounded.				
2	Regiments British Grenadiers, }	1740	.	.	.	612
2	do. Light Infantry, }		.	.	.	
2	Brigades of British,	2240	.	.	.	360
1	do. of Hessians,	800	.	.	.	60
	Ferguson's Rifle,	80	.	.	.	46
		4860				1078

"Middle Ford, under General Gray [Grey].

2	Battalions Guards,	500
2	do. 42d Regiment Highlanders,	700
2	do. 72d do. do.	700
		1900

"Lower Ford, Chad's, under Lieutenant-General Knyphausen.

2	British Brigades, consisting of 4, 5, 10, 15, 23, 27, 28, 40, 49, and 55th Regiments,	2240	.	.	.	580
1	Brigade Hessians,	800	.	.	.	28
	Queen's Rangers,	480	.	.	.	290
		3520	.	.	.	898
		6760	.	.	.	
		10280	.	.	.	1976 "

These figures, denoting the number of the British forces in the field and of their loss in the battle, coincide with those in a "Life of Washington" by Headley (p. 258), except that he states the loss of Lord Cornwallis's brigade of Hessians to be seventy, instead of sixty, and consequently makes the total loss of the British nineteen hundred and eighty-six.

In the "Historical Magazine" for March, 1867, (published by
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Mr. Henry B. Dawson, Morrisania, New York,) at page 148, are several letters from Captain William Beatty, of the Maryland line, to his father. In one, dated Skippack, October 13th, 1777, he says he had previously sent the particulars of the battle of Brandywine "except a return that was taken at Germantown battle, which gives an account that the enemy's loss at Brandywine was nineteen hundred and seventy-six killed and wounded."

This evidence, if reliance is to be placed on it, supports Colonel Pickering's impression that the British loss in killed and wounded exceeded that of the Americans (see page 162); and that their force on the field, which he speaks of loosely as amounting to eight or nine thousand men (see page 175), was less than it is usually represented to have been. But he, and more especially General Washington, must have been informed of the above statement of the British loss, and I know not how to account for their silence respecting it (for I am not aware that it is alluded to by either of them), except on the presumption that they did not deem it worthy of credit.

No. III. (p. 460.)

STATE OF OHIO.

"Propositions for settling a new State by such officers and soldiers of the Federal army as shall associate for that purpose :

"1. That the United States purchase of the natives that tract of country which is bounded by Pennsylvania on the east, the River Ohio on the south, a meridian line drawn thirty miles west of the mouth of the River Scioto on the west,—this meridian to run from the Ohio to the Miami River, which runs into Lake Erie,—and by this river and Lake Erie on the north.

"2. That, in the first instance, lands be assigned to the army to fulfil the engagements of the United States by the resolutions of the 16th of September, 1776, August 13th and September 30th, 1780, to wit :—

"To a major-general,	1100 acres.
" brigadier-general,	850 "
" colonel,	500 "
" lieutenant-colonel,	450 "

"To a major,	400 acres.
" captain,	300 "
" lieutenant,	200 "
" an ensign, or cornet,	150 "
" a non-commissioned officer and soldier,	100 "
" the director of the military hospitals,	850 "
" chief physician and purveyor, each,	500 "
" physicians, surgeons, and apothecary, each,	450 "
" regimental surgeons and assistants to the pur- veyor and apothecary, each, }	400 "
" hospital and regimental surgeons' mates, each,	300 "

"3. That all associators who shall actually settle in the new State within one year after the purchase shall be effected, and notice given by Congress or the committee of the associators that the same is ready for settlement (such notice to be published in the newspapers of all the United States), shall receive such additional quantities of land as to make their respective rights in the whole to contain the following numbers of acres, to wit:—

" A major-general,	2400 acres.
" brigadier-general,	2200 "
" colonel,	2000 "
" lieutenant-colonel,	1800 "
" major,	1600 "
" captain,	1400 "
" lieutenant,	1200 "
" ensign, or cornet,	1000 "
" sergeant,	700 "
Other non-commissioned officers and soldiers, each,	600 "

And fifty acres more for each member of a family, besides the head of it.

"4. That the rights of the officers in the medical department be increased in like manner on the same condition.

"5. That all officers in the other staff departments, who shall actually settle in the new State within the time above limited, shall receive rights of land in the proportions last stated, on an equitable comparison of their stations with the ranks of the officers of the line and the medical staff.

"6. That this increased provision of lands shall extend to all officers of the line and staff, and to all non-commissioned officers and

soldiers, who during the present war have performed in the whole three years' service, whether in service or not at the close of the war, provided they present their claims and become actual settlers in the new State by the time above limited.

"7. These rights being secured, all the surplus lands shall be the common property of the State, and disposed of for the common good ; as for laying out roads, building bridges, erecting public buildings, establishing schools and academies, defraying the expenses of government, and other public uses.

"8. That every grantee shall have a house built, and acres of land cleared on his right within years, or the same shall be forfeited to the State.

"9. That, to enable the associators to undertake the settlement of the new State, the United States defray the expenses of the march thither, furnish the necessary utensils of husbandry, and such live stock as shall be indispensably requisite for commencing the settlement, and subsistence for three years, to wit, one ration of bread and meat per day to each man, woman, and child ; and to every soldier a suit of clothes annually, — the cost of these articles to be charged to the accounts of arrearages due to the members of the association respectively.

"10. That, for the security of the State against the Indians, every officer and soldier go armed, — the arms to be furnished by the United States, and charged to the accounts of arrearages. Ammunition to be supplied in the same way.

"11. That a constitution for the new State be formed by the members of the association previous to their commencing the settlement, two thirds of the associators present at a meeting duly notified for that purpose agreeing therein. The total exclusion of slavery from the State to form an essential and irrevocable part of the Constitution.

"12. That the associators so assembled agree on such general rules as they shall deem necessary for the prevention and punishment of crimes, and the preservation of peace and good order in the State, to have the force of laws during the space of two years, unless an Assembly of the State, formed agreeably to the Constitution, shall sooner repeal them.

"13. That the State so constituted shall be admitted into the confederacy of the United States, and entitled to all the benefits of the Union, in common with the other members thereof.

"14. That, at the above-mentioned meeting of the associators,

delegates be chosen to represent them in the Congress of the United States, to take their seats as soon as the new State shall be erected.

“ 15. That, the associators having borne together as brethren the dangers and calamities of war, and feeling that mutual friendship which long acquaintance and common sufferings give rise to ; it being also the obvious dictate of humanity to supply the wants of the needy, and alleviate the distresses of the afflicted, — it shall be an inviolable rule, to take under the immediate patronage of the State the wives and children of such associators, who, having settled there, shall die, or, by cause of wounds or sickness, be rendered unable to improve their plantations, or follow their occupations, during the first twenty-one years. So that such destitute and distressed families shall receive such public aids, as, joined with their own reasonable exertions, will maintain them in a manner suitable to the condition of the heads of them ; especially that the children, when grown up, may be on a footing with other children, whose parents, at the original formation of the State, were in similar circumstances with those of the former.”

